

# Gardening AUSTRALIA

ABC

March 2015

Watch repeat  
episodes 10am  
weekdays  
on ABC

TOP 10  
VEGIES  
FOR SMALL  
SPACES

decked out  
Post-summer  
care tips

NATURAL  
DECORATION  
Drape your  
garden with  
Chinese lanterns

**CATCH IT  
IF YOU CAN**  
Why rain  
gardens work

bulbs for  
everyone

How to choose a variety perfect for your climate

this issue

A ROUNDUP OF THIS  
SEASON'S BEST SHOWS ■ SAY BYE  
BYE TO BOUGHT GARLIC WITH  
OUR GROWING GUIDE ■ DESIGN  
IDEAS FROM A COASTAL GARDEN



FEATHERS & FUR! YOUR PET AND CHOOK QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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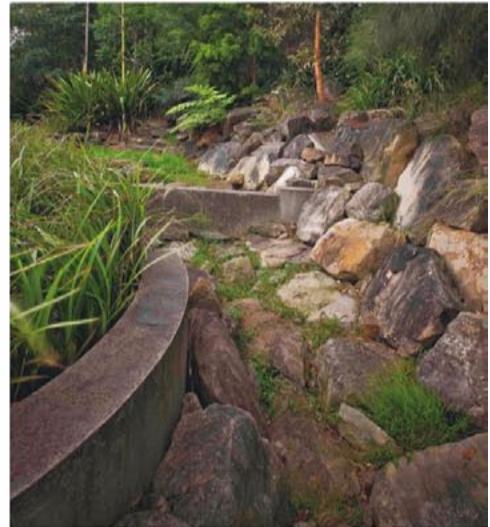
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**NT**

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**UNDER**  
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# Editor's Letter



## looking ahead

Although spring may seem a distant dream, now is the time to decide which bulbs will be 'blooming beautiful' when it arrives. Bulb catalogues are out, brimming with every flower imaginable, and it's a tough choice to decide which bulbs are best for your garden. If you're like me, the bulbs you adore don't always suit your climate. Don't despair! We have lots of ideas for bulbs for all climates (see page 40) – and there's plenty of choice, so you're bound to find something that will work in your area.

Autumn is approaching, and planting opportunities abound. Now's the time to take stock, make adjustments, or create something new. A rain garden is an addition really worth considering. Located in the right spot, it reduces run-off and erosion in your garden, and also filters stormwater pollution. Our backyards are part of the catchment area, so it's a great way to help maintain healthy waterways. Find out how on page 50.

While you're 'taking stock', how's your deck looking after the ravages of summer? Many need attention, whether it's a quick clean up or more major restoration. We get down to business with plenty of ideas for how to maintain your deck, to improve its appearance, safety and longevity. Turn to page 46 for some tips.

Sadly, this is my last issue as horticultural editor. It's been a fantastic year, and I hope you've learnt as much about your garden as I have about so many things. Farewell and happy gardening!

Louise

### let us know

We'd love to hear what you think about this month's issue of *Gardening Australia*, or find out what you've been busy doing in your garden. Write to us at Your Say, *Gardening Australia*, NewsLifeMedia, Level 1, Locked Bag 5030, Alexandria NSW 2015 or email [yoursay@gardeningaustralia.com.au](mailto:yoursay@gardeningaustralia.com.au)



### stay in touch

Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/ABC GardeningAustraliaMagazine](https://facebook.com/ABC GardeningAustraliaMagazine) and Instagram @gardeningaustraliamag to keep up to date with the latest gardening news and to see some great photos.

# Join the Diggers Club

"The Diggers Club began over 30 years ago and we are now Australia's largest gardening club, with the most popular garden magazine and more members than Australia's largest football club. Imagine how more satisfying it is to spend five hours in your garden growing your own flowers and food than watching the footy! We are helping gardeners from Hobart to Cairns," says founder Clive Blazey.

## Club entitlements

### Eight magazines a year...

Throughout the year we'll post you our magazines, featuring the best heirloom seeds, cottage flowers, perennials and roses to succeed in your garden. Our magazine articles are provocative and innovative, fearlessly tackling GM, seed ownership, climate change, organics and ethical food.



### Your gardens to visit...

Be inspired by stunning gardens, each a living catalogue of Digger's heirloom seeds and plants, with free entry to historic **Heronswood** house and garden in Dromana, **St Erth** in Blackwood and **Cloudehill** in the Dandenong Ranges, Victoria. Heronswood is also home to your club dining room, located in the historic house with free entry to members (visitors can purchase a \$10 day pass to the house and gardens).

### Your club dining room...



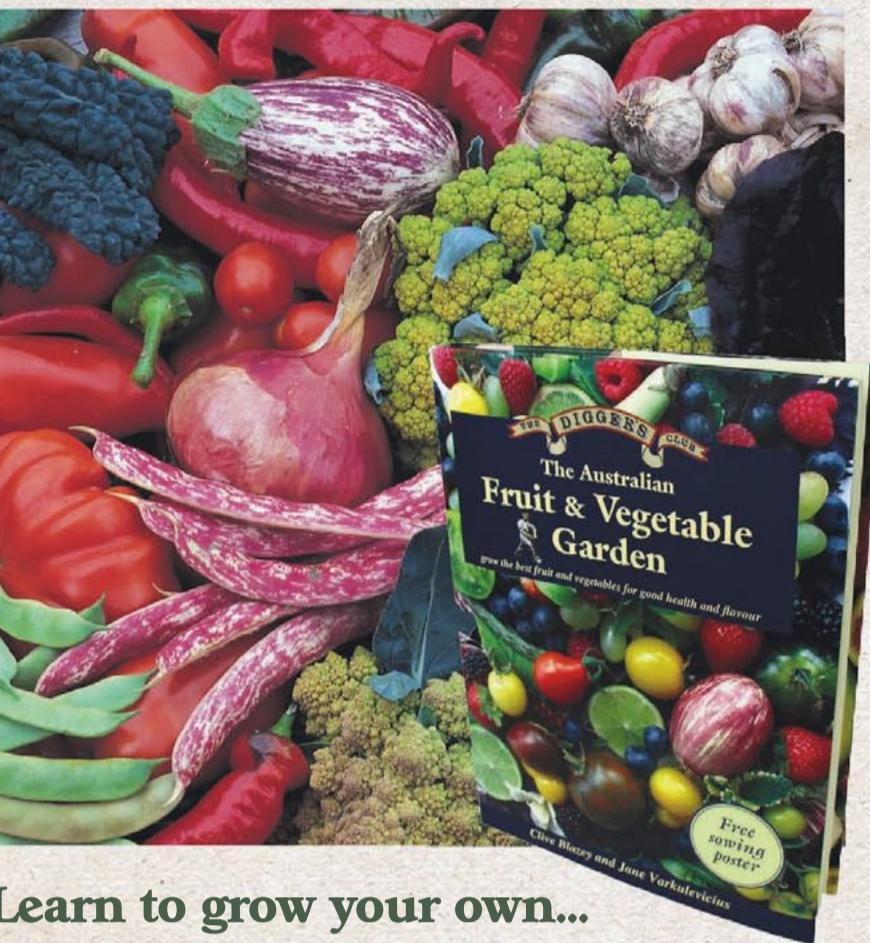
AT HISTORIC HERONSWOOD

03 5984 7318



ST ERTH

03 5368 6514



### Learn to grow your own...

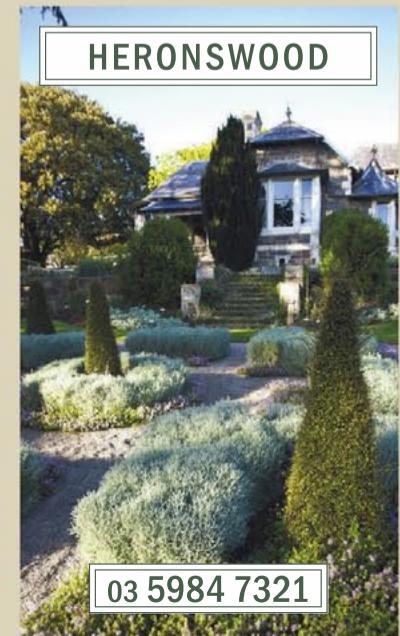
It's all explained in our book *The Australian Fruit & Vegetable Garden*. Over 240 heirloom vegetables and herbs, plus 188 fruits, nuts and berries are photographed and described for all climates. From avocado to white sapote, with the most comprehensive climate guide to ensure your success. Includes three mini plot planting plans for first timers. RRP \$39.95 (just \$34.95 with a 1 year membership).

### Inspirational shopping...

Visit our nurseries at these gardens, plus our shop in the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide. Diggers have hundreds of exclusive plants (*wasabi*, *capers*, *world's hottest chilli*) that you won't find at the box warehouses and members can save up to 30% on quantity purchases of seeds and plants. Members also receive 8 free packets of seeds each year.



CLOUDEHILL



HERONSWOOD

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03 5984 7321

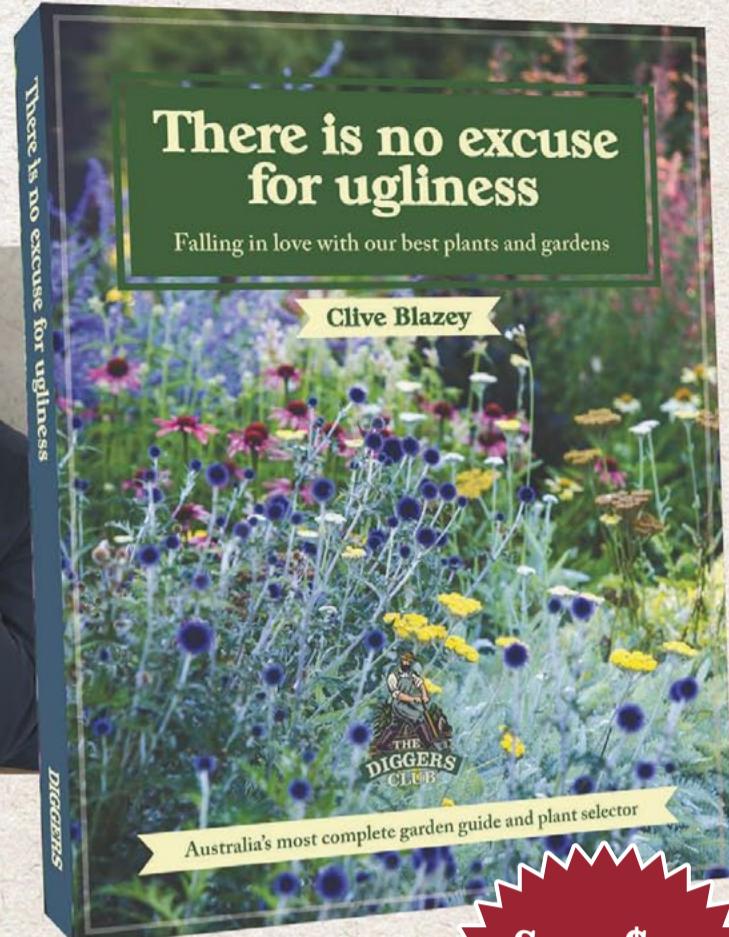
# Falling in love with the best plants and gardens

"I was inspired to write my new book, *There Is No Excuse For Ugliness*, to explain why our modern suburban garden approach fails and to help people to create a garden that is aesthetically stimulating and cool during the hottest of Australian summers."

"Create beautiful garden pictures by planting tried and proven plants that survive drought, heat waves and extreme cold," says author **Clive Blazey**.

Clive was inspired by creating the gardens at Heronswood and travelling the world in search of the best plants and gardens. Over 100 colour pictures of beautiful gardens across Australia and Europe are featured to show you how easy it is to do in your own backyard. Following 36 years of trialling garden plants, 700 have been chosen that have become features at the Diggers gardens of Heronswood and St Erth and are seen in the finest gardens at Cloudehill and our botanic gardens.

Part of the book is a Plant Selector, Australia's most complete list of herbs, perennials, roses, bulbs, annuals, trees and shrubs that are anything but commonplace and includes detailed growing descriptions. This is a book for both the beginner and the experienced gardener that explains the basics of garden botany for gardening success. RRP \$29.95 (just \$19.95 with a 1 year membership).



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# march



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Sophie Thomson tells us what she's planting in her edible patch this month (page 24), and shares her top vegies for small spaces (page 62).



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on the cover

Bulb-planting season is upon us, so it's time to start thinking about what you'd like to see blossoming in your garden come spring. If you need help choosing a bulb that will suit your climate, head to page 41. We've got you sorted!

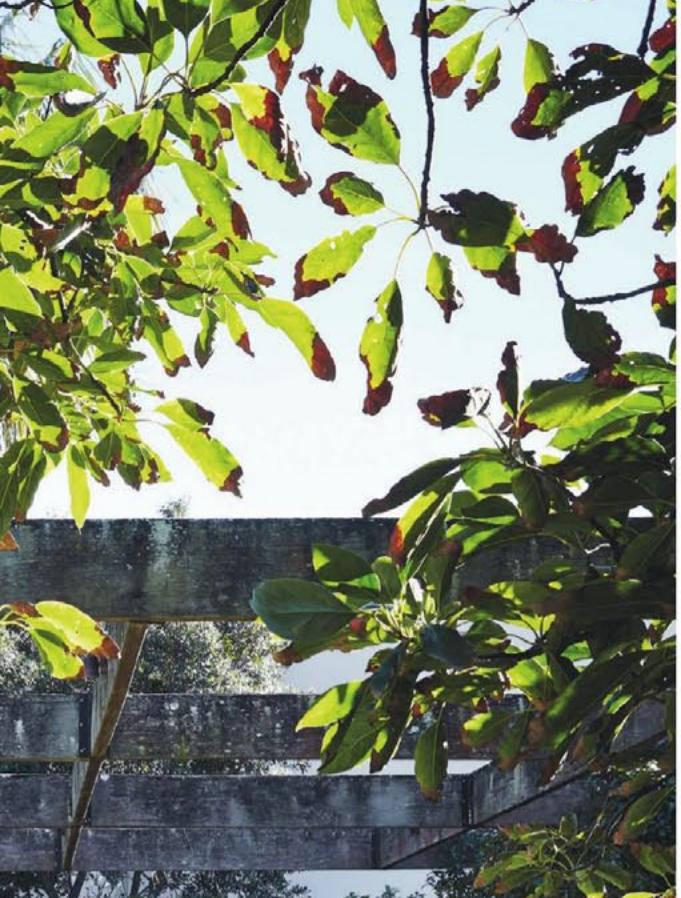
Cover photo: GAP.



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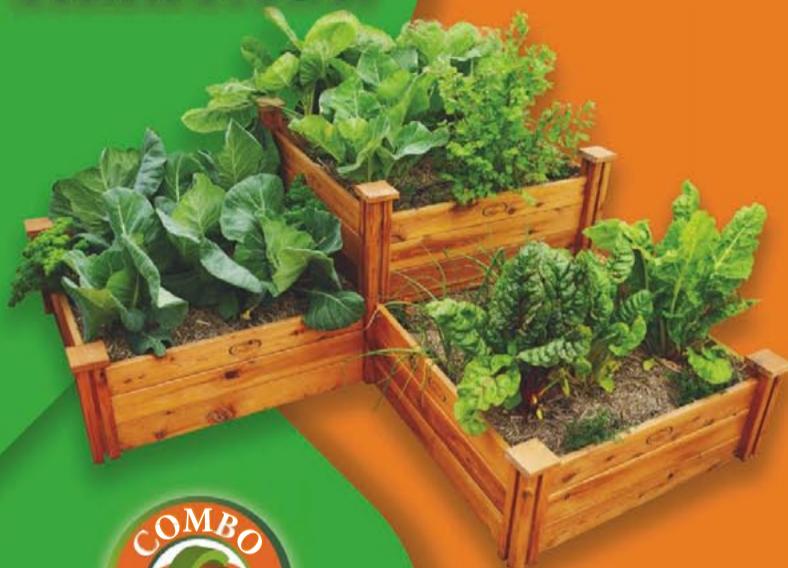
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# letterbox

Readers share gardening experiences, top tips and photos.  
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## letter of the month



### GARDEN BED

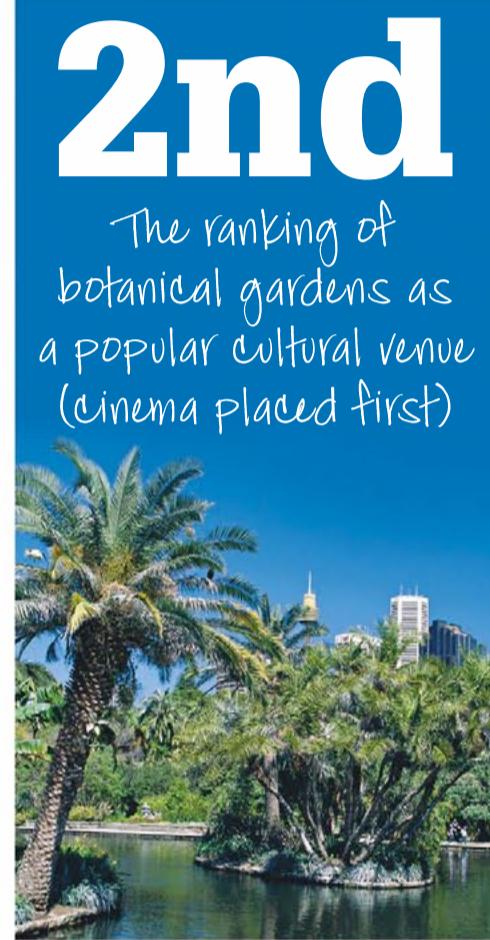
The Letter of the Month wins a \$100 gift voucher from Nursery & Garden Industry Australia to spend at an accredited garden centre. For more information, visit [plantlifebalance.com.au](http://plantlifebalance.com.au)



### A grand gardener

Every day my 94-year-old mother, Mary McPherson, tends her beautiful garden as she has for the past 69 years since she and my late father built their home. Mum grows her own vegetables, and like all good gardeners she is still redesigning and refining beds. She is always trying out new plants. There isn't much this wonderful lady doesn't know about gardening.

**M Somers, Teneriffe, Qld**



### ARE YOU OUR FACEBOOK FAN OF THE MONTH?

THANK YOU TO LYN WEYLAND FOR THIS PIC OF A RARE PINK ARUM LILY, FLOWERING FOR THE SECOND TIME IN 15 YEARS. WHAT AN INCREDIBLE BEAUTY.



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## BRANCHING OUT

I painted this offcut branch of a dragon tree in winter, then tied it to the mother tree and planted daffodils at its base. Incredibly, in spring my blue branch produced leaves (inset). I'm amazed, as the branch was only resting on top, not dug in.

**M Richards,  
Heathcote, Vic**



## BIRD BANDIT

Planting my garden with Australian natives has brought many birds to my home, including bowerbirds. One hopeful male has built this amazing bower with its collection of blue balloons, wristbands, pegs, string, and odds and ends. He's always busy tidying up and adorning his beautiful creation.

**C Stevenson, Bodalla, NSW**

Write to us...

Got a great gardening tip or photo? Share it with us! Write to: Your Say, Gardening Australia, NewsLifeMedia, Level 1, Locked Bag 5030, Alexandria NSW 2015 or email us at [yoursay@gardeningaustralia.com.au](mailto:yoursay@gardeningaustralia.com.au). Please note, letters may be edited for space and clarity, and photos may be posted on our Facebook page.



## JOIN US ON INSTAGRAM!



We'd love to share some nature photos with you. Thanks @cayedc for this cute flower arrangement pic (above right).

Join us @gardeningaustraliamag and follow us for garden inspiration, or #gardeningaustraliamag so we can admire all your gorgeous photos.

## Aussie battler

Australia is well known for having difficult conditions in which to grow grass with its poor soils and extremes of temperature. Unlike introduced species, native grasses such as Griffin weeping grass (below) have evolved to cope, and are ideal for lawns, landscaping, revegetation or as pasture. The benefits are immense, while also being beautiful to look at when in seed. For more information, call (03) 9555 1722.

We are giving away four native grass seed packs from Native Seeds, valued at \$150 each. To enter, tell us in 25 words or fewer about the wildlife that visits your yard. Send your name, address and entry on an envelope and send to Gardening Australia/Grass, NewsLifeMedia, Locked Bag 5030, Alexandria NSW 2015 or [comp@gardeningaustralia.com.au](mailto:comp@gardeningaustralia.com.au) with 'Grass' in the subject line by March 8.



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## On the grapevine

We keep you up to date in the gardening world with all the latest news and events



# 1

### CASTING CALL

*Gardening Australia* host Costa is swapping timeslots on the ABC to star as a gnome on *Get Grubby TV*, a 30-minute kids' show featuring the characters from *dirtgirlworld*. Costa will be joined by a live-action dirtgirl and scrapboy, and supported by a cast of 3- to 11-year-old green thumbs. Tune in as they travel to a community garden and a preschool to make pizzas and seedballs from garden produce, and get grubby growing a salad garden. DVD available from [getgrubbytv.com.au](http://getgrubbytv.com.au).



# 2

### urban farming

A new city farm in Canberra has recently opened its gates to teach town dwellers how to live and garden sustainably. Canberra City Farm in Turner will provide a site for community workshops while showcasing water harvesting and energy generation. For details, visit [ccfarm.org.au](http://ccfarm.org.au).



# 3

### MIFGS celebration

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show. Along with the mainstay attractions, visitors can expect an exciting new exhibit from The Diggers Club with demonstrations and workshops on all things backyard. It runs March 25–29. For details, visit [melbflowershow.com.au](http://melbflowershow.com.au).

# 4

### plantbank app

Visitors to the much-lauded

Australian Plantbank at the Australian Botanic Garden, Mt Annan can now enjoy a fun and informative tour through the laboratories and seed vault with a free app. Use it to hear insights from the bank's scientists and horticulturists, or read up on some plant facts in the Q&A section. Download the app from iTunes or Google Play. For more details, visit [plantbank.org.au](http://plantbank.org.au).



# 5

### plants & products

Following the success of the ever-popular Queensland Garden Expo in Nambour, a new event, The Brisbane International Garden Show, is hoping to draw in the crowds. It will be held over four days at Pine Rivers Park, Strathpine, October 8–11. Visit [brisbanegardenshow.com.au](http://brisbanegardenshow.com.au) for more information.



### kitchen garden in the gardens

A new kitchen garden is being built on the grounds of the Adelaide Botanic Garden for educational and outreach programs, specifically school groups. Sections of the garden are scheduled to open by February with ongoing development over four years. Visit [abgf.org](http://abgf.org) for details.

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by ally jackson

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2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



## what's new

Here are some of the latest plant releases, plus a selection of books and products. Find them in nurseries, hardware stores, bookshops or online

The beautiful, violet-hued *Iris reticulata 'Cantab'* flowers on 15cm stems during the depths of winter, withstanding frost, wind, rain and even snow! Originally from the wilds of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and the Caucasus, this delicate-looking, bulbous iris is one of the toughest and easiest to grow. Plant about 12–15cm deep in a well-drained spot that receives all-day winter sun. Add dolomite or lime to well-prepared beds, if necessary, as it doesn't like acid soils. The good news is, there's no need to water it over summer as it loves the dry. 'Cantab' is a one-year wonder in a pot, so move to a garden bed in subsequent years to ensure the spectacular flowering continues. [lambley.com.au](http://lambley.com.au)



Treloar Roses and the ANZAC Day Commemorative Committee have combined forces to create the **Gallipoli Centenary Rose** to commemorate the landing of the ANZACs in Gallipoli 100 years ago. The deep red rose has won many awards for hardiness and disease tolerance in Australia and overseas. A modern Shrub rose, it grows 1.2m tall and 80cm wide. Bare-rooted stock available from early June 2015, with orders being taken now. Plant one this winter to commemorate our ANZAC heroes. [treloarroses.com.au](http://treloarroses.com.au)

**Lily Tulip 'Seattle'** has petal tips that point outward and, from above, they have a star-like quality. Lily tulips are named for their flower shape, which resembles old species tulips from Turkey. The flowers open and close with the daylight. The long-lasting flowers bring vibrant colour to the garden in spring and are great cut flowers. They're drought tolerant and are well suited to pots; lift and store at the end of each flowering season. [tesselaar.net.au](http://tesselaar.net.au)



Add an eye-catching display to the garden in spring with **blue and white blend Muscari**. Grape hyacinths are one of the most attractive dwarf bulbs for spring, with bead-like flower spikes reaching 10–15cm tall. They are easy to grow and naturalise under trees or along garden paths. They are very adaptable when it comes to soil types, and like semi-shade to full sun. Best planted in autumn, to a depth of about 7cm, and about 10cm apart, unless you are going for a clustered look. [gardenexpress.com.au](http://gardenexpress.com.au)

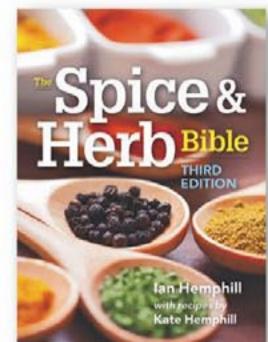


## books

by kate barber

### **The Spice & Herb Bible (3rd edition) by Ian Hemphill, published by Robert Rose, \$39.99**

This book explores the amazing world of herbs and spices. It includes fascinating historical background, storage tips, uses and recipes to try.

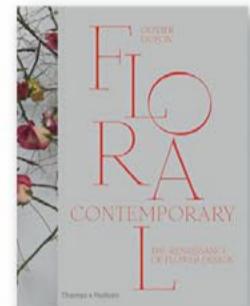


I was blown away by the number of herbs and spices I'd never come across before.

### **Floral Contemporary**

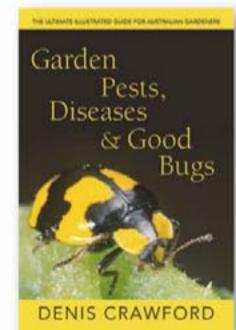
**by Olivier Dupon, Thames & Hudson, \$90**

A luscious coffee table book that lets you into the minds of outstanding flower artists from around the world. With full-colour images of their beautiful floral artworks, it had me thinking beyond the standard posy from the local florist. If you think creatively, there's an incredible scope for ways you can arrange flowers.



### **Garden Pests, Diseases & Good Bugs by Denis Crawford, ABC Books, \$39.99**

This is the new book from *ABC Gardening Australia* magazine's garden pest and disease expert. It's jam-packed with thoroughly researched information and incredible close-up images. Once you identify the offending insect or disease, there's plenty of advice on what you should do next.



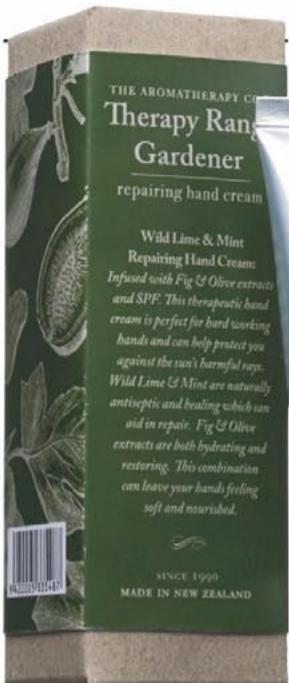
## virtual gardening

If you're a fan of Australian native plants, check out [gardeningwithangus.com.au](http://gardeningwithangus.com.au). It's created by Angus Stewart, who is a presenter on *Gardening Australia*, author of many books on natives and a writer for our magazine. There's a comprehensive plant search function, articles packed full of tips, and how-to videos on subjects such as propagating and composting. He also profiles some of his favourite plants, which might help you narrow down what to look for when you're at the nursery next.

# it's planting time!

The season we've all been waiting for is finally here, so head out there and get growing! Afterwards, sit back, relax and survey all you've achieved





1



2



9



3



8



10



7



6



5



1. The Aromatherapy Co. Therapy Range Gardener 75ml **hand cream**, \$17.95, from Oscura.
2. Thoughtful Gardener **pruners**, \$32.95, from Until.
3. Tia **throw**, \$249.95, from KAS Australia.
4. Botanical **card**, NZ\$8.95, from Father Rabbit.
5. Brass garden **hand trowel**, \$29.95, from Vine & Co.
6. Pod **calendula seeds**, NZ\$4, and Pod **parsley seeds**, NZ\$4, from Father Rabbit.
7. Thoughtful Gardener **garden gloves**, \$29.95, from Until.
8. Le Creuset round cast iron **casserole** (24cm), \$469.
9. Thoughtful Gardener enamel **herb pot set**, \$49.95, from Until.
10. Thoughtful Gardener **bee house**, \$29.95, from Until.

## plant of the month

by marcelle nankervis

### at a glance

**Common name**  
Chinese lantern  
**Botanical name**  
*Abutilon* spp. & hybrids  
**Plant type**  
shrub (usually evergreen)  
↑ 0.3–2.5m ↔ 0.3–2.5m  
full sun to semi-shade  
summer to autumn  
late winter and early spring



■ suitable

# delicate beauties

With paper-thin petals and prominent stamens, Chinese lanterns are a pleasing addition to the garden and happily grow almost anywhere



**E**verything old is new again, and the reignited interest in *Abutilon* hybrids comes as no big surprise. Known as Chinese lanterns, abutilon are vibrant, long-flowering shrubs that are capable of bringing a profusion of colour to the garden almost all year round in some climates. And thanks to advances in breeding, modern hybrids feature compact growth, double flowers and an impressive selection of colours and shades, opening up a whole new range of landscaping possibilities for home gardeners.

My earliest memory of their striking flowers is from when I was visiting my grandparents' garden in the Melbourne suburb of Dandenong. They had a large, vibrant pink shrub growing against a north-facing wall. I remember being intrigued by the veins in the petals. Because the prominence of this feature is largely dependent on flower colour, I have always preferred the bolder hybrids in red and orange over the paler shades.

With their almost crepe-like petals and spectacular stamens, the blooms bear a striking resemblance to other members of the Malvaceae family, such as hibiscus and hollyhocks. ▶



### top tip

Propagate *Abutilon* from semi-hardwood cuttings in late summer to autumn, taking a cutting about 10cm long with 3–4 leaves. Place in propagating sand and keep shaded until roots form.



### origin of species

There are reported to be between 150 and 200 species of abutilon, however the ones that are most commonly available in Australia are hybrids listed as *Abutilon x hybridum*. While they mostly go by the name Chinese lantern, they're also known as mallow and flowering maple (due to their similar foliage).

They are available in a wide variety of colours, forms and sizes. New dwarf hybrids that only grow to 30cm are perfect for pots, while larger shrubs reaching 1–3m are best suited for planting out in your garden beds and borders.

Originally from the tropical and subtropical areas of Africa, Asia, Central and South America, and Australia, abutilon are mostly frost sensitive and prefer a northerly aspect in full sun or semi-shade.

Abutilon grow in most regions, however, it's advisable to protect them from frost and cold winds. Water regularly in warmer months and allow the soil to dry out in winter. They are prone to attack from the same insects as hibiscus, such as harlequin bug. Avoid high-nitrogen fertilisers and spray the plant or bug with pyrethrum.

### HANGING AROUND

Clockwise from left *Abutilon vitifolium* is a deciduous variety; the compact *A. x milleri*; 'Lucky Lantern' in white; 'Tutu' has double flowers; 'Lucky Lantern' in tangerine.





### in the garden

Popular with birds, butterflies and bees, abutilon are an excellent source of pollen and nectar. They also attract beneficial insects and pollinators to the garden.

The striking flowers feature a conspicuous fused tube of stamen that's a brilliant contrast to the surrounding petals and hairy green foliage. Most abutilon flowers are drooping, however they're not necessarily bell-shaped. While some have flared flowers, such as *A. vitifolium*, others such as *A. x milleri* and *A. megapotamicum* have a prominent calyx.

Larger shrubs can become leggy over time, so it's best to prune them back annually after flowering to maintain a compact habit. My

grandparents cut their plant back by at least a third annually, and it was always an attractive, prolific shrub.

These plants prefer a semi-shaded position in the hot inland areas of Australia and full sun in cooler regions. *Abutilon x hybridum* can be incorporated in most garden styles depending on colour. In cottage gardens, try pastel pink and purple hybrids where they readily complement salvia and lavender. In contrast, the vibrant reds, yellows and oranges are at home in a tropical-inspired garden alongside clivia and bird of paradise (*Strelitzia* spp.).

If you're looking for an evergreen shrub with a long flowering season, an *Abutilon* hybrid is a great option to try in your garden. **GA**



**"Popular with birds, butterflies and bees, abutilon are a source of pollen and nectar"**



### top 5 abutilon

■ **'Bella' series** A collection of dwarf shrubs with open, upright flowers. Available in a mix of colours including red, orange, yellow, pink and white, they flower from spring to autumn and prefer semi-shade.  $\uparrow 0.5\text{--}1\text{m} \leftrightarrow 0.5\text{--}1\text{m}$

■ **'Halo'** Highly decorative with corn-coloured petals, red ruffled sepals and bright golden stamen. Suitable for coastal areas, 'Halo' is reasonably drought tolerant, and flowers almost year round. Plant in full sun.  $\uparrow 1.2\text{m} \leftrightarrow 1.2\text{m}$

■ **'Tutu'** A spectacular compact, double, soft pink hybrid with forest green foliage. Ideal in gardens or a large tub. Apply fertiliser in spring and again in summer for optimal flower performance. Prune back hard after flowering.  $\uparrow 2\text{m} \leftrightarrow 1.5\text{m}$

■ **'Red Emperor'** (above) Rich red, flowering, old-fashioned variety that has proven itself with gardeners for generations. It flowers from spring through summer. Mulch well and protect from wind and frost. Tip-prune when young to reduce leggy growth.  $\uparrow 2\text{m} \leftrightarrow 2\text{m}$

■ **'Lucky Lantern' series** A range of dwarf abutilons in red, yellow, tangerine and white. Ideal in pots and planters, these hybrids are heat and drought tolerant once established. Position in full sun or semi-shade in outdoor entertaining areas for maximum impact.  $\uparrow 0.5\text{m} \leftrightarrow 0.3\text{--}0.4\text{m}$



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# in my garden

photography by VINCENT LONG

As much as we live for summer in our coolish climate, March is welcomed with open arms. The promise of cooler nights, still days and autumn showers is as soothing as a massage. Summer stresses melt away, and the garden revives, along with us.

michael



if I only have...

5 minutes

There's still time before winter for short-season, quick-turnover stuff in the vegetable garden, so I'll plant a row of lettuce, carrot or beetroot from seed. I'll also plant a punnet or two of broccoli, cabbage or cauliflower seedlings. It's too late to sow seed of these winter vegies in my climate, but probably not yours. You want them to be as big as possible by the time winter sets in.

15 minutes

There's no point in growing showstopping autumn-flowering shrubs or perennials if the show is ruined by spent flowers in decay. So I'll deadhead some blooms that are past their best in order to tidy the scene for those yet to come. I'll also plant some spring-flowering bulbs. Tulips and hyacinths can't go in yet, but it's never too early for daffodils and most other bulbs.

30 minutes

I'm a shocker for remembering to sow spring-flowering biennials, such as wallflowers and foxgloves, at the right time. But this year I'm on target, so I'll give them a liquid feed to fatten them up for winter or plant them out as soon as there's rainfall. St Patrick's Day marks sweet pea sowing time, so I'll make a rough trellis or teepee, then sow the seeds at the base.

# this month's jobs...

After a long, hot summer, March is a welcome relief. Planting month has arrived and our experts are making the most of it

## TROPICAL

I'm preparing vegie beds by digging in the cover crop. I'll also build up raised beds in layers of green weeds, horse or cow manure, plenty of chook manure, hay mulch and a good sprinkling of both lime and trace elements. Later, I'll sow tomatoes, eggplant and Chinese cabbages to be transplanted when the rains stop. **Leonie Norrington**



## TEMPERATE WEST COAST

Growing fresh greens can be tough in summer because they tend to wilt and bolt to seed from stress. Aquatic greens, such as Lebanese cress, kangkong and English watercress (above) are great substitutes that thrive in either a pond or a sealed pot filled with boggy soil. The trick is to cut and harvest regularly for tender foliage. **Josh Byrne**

## INLAND

March is a great month to commence planting out a winter vegie garden, so I'm doing exactly that. Planted now, brussels sprout, cauliflower, broccoli and cabbage will thrive. Cauliflower and brussels sprout need at least four months and sometimes longer to fully mature. You don't want them maturing in August as the aphids descend on the garden. **Geoff Miers**



## MEDITERRANEAN

"March can still be a 'killer month' in South Australia with blistering heat not uncommon. Even though it usually feels more like summer than autumn, I try to start planting winter vegies such as broccoli, peas, leek, cabbage, spinach and silverbeet" **sophie**



## SUBTROPICS

I'll be spraying my citrus with white oil to control leafminer (right). It's easy to make your own. Mix 2 cups of sunflower oil with 1/2 cup of dishwashing detergent. Stir 1 tbsp of this concentrate into 1L of water. Apply weekly to leaves and bark for three weeks. It also works on aphid and scale. **Jerry Coleby-Williams**



## TEMPERATE EAST COAST

At this time of year, I'll cut the lomandras back to ground level to get rid of unsightly spent flower stems and leaves. Very large clumps can be lifted and divided to rejuvenate them. When I do this, I establish them in pots to get the roots growing strongly before replanting them in the garden. This is also a great time to plant rice flowers (*Ozothamnus diosmifolius*, right). A number of beautiful cultivars such as 'Coral Flush' and 'Petite' are now available, from snow white to bright pink and various shades in between. They bring an interesting texture to the garden and can also be used as a long-lasting cut flower. **Angus Stewart**



## COLD CLIMATES & MOUNTAIN REGIONS

"Quince (right), apple, pear and nectarine are weighing tree branches down with fruit. I'll be grazing from herbs and lettuces in the vegie garden, then will sow my deeply fragrant, old-fashioned sweet pea seeds on St Patrick's Day" **trisha**



## COOL TEMPERATE

Right now, I'm keenly looking forward to the spring bulb catalogues that arrive in my mailbox. They always inspire me with such a huge range of tried and true bulbs, such as daffodils like 'King Alfred' and 'Erlicheer' (left), or the more unusual varieties such as the martagon lily (*Lilium martagon*) with its pink to mauve flowers.

I also like arab's eye (*Ornithogalum arabicum*), which has white flowers with black centres. **Jane Edmanson**



## COOL CLIMATES

There are so many tomatoes they seem to cover every surface of the house. The rest of the space is taken up with corn, zucchini, pumpkins and piles of beans of all different colours. The word glut comes to mind but luckily the smell of chutney and preserves permeating through the house means that nothing will go to waste. **Tino Carnevale**



## if you have...

It's planting season, so make sure you get the most out of your garden by giving it a little extra loving care with these quick jobs

### 10 minutes

#### plant

- Sow spring-flowering annuals such as granny's bonnet, petunia, calendula, stock, ageratum, foxglove and wallflower.

#### feed & water

- Feed lawns with slow-release food for growth before winter.
- Fertilise roses now for the best autumn blooms.
- Sprinkle a little dolomite around lime-loving plants such as lilac, lavender, pink hydrangea and flowering almond.
- Feed all potted plants with liquid fertiliser once a fortnight to strengthen plants before the cold of winter stops their growth.

#### prune

- Hard-prune untidy salvias to freshen them after a big summer performance.
- Watch out for gall wasp swellings on the stems of wattle (*Acacia* spp., *above*). Cut them off, bag and dispose of them in the garbage so they don't reinfect your plants.
- Tip-prune summer-flowering natives once flowers are spent to keep plants compact.
- Cut back hanging baskets of *Dichondra argentea* 'Silver Falls' and re-pot into larger containers to encourage the plant to reshoot and return to glorious vigour.



### 30 minutes

#### plant

- Sow sweet peas from now until early April. Dig in dolomite if your soil is acidic.
- Start planting seedlings of violas and pansies (*above*). Look out for this season's new releases.
- Sow seed of larkspur, poppies and native strawflower (*Xerochrysum bracteatum*) directly into compost-improved soil.



#### feed & water

- If your camellias have been prone to bud drop in the past, water them with a solution of 1tsp Epsom salts to 9L of water.
- Prepare holes for planting bare-rooted trees and shrubs in winter. Dig over and mix in compost or well-rotted manure.
- Water less frequently with automatic irrigation systems as temperatures fall, and check and clear blocked drippers. Handwater new plants deeply if hot weather prevails.

- Rejuvenate tired containers by re-potting and adding slow-release fertiliser.

#### prune

- Cut back overgrown gardenias (*left*), hard if necessary. In cold areas, wait for the end of next spring.
- Give potato vine (*Solanum jasminoides*) a 'going over' with shears.
- Prune penstemon and gaura to the ground as they finish flowering.
- Trim red-flowering gums (*Corymbia ficifolia*) and bottlebrush (*Callistemon* spp.) behind spent flowerheads to keep plants compact.



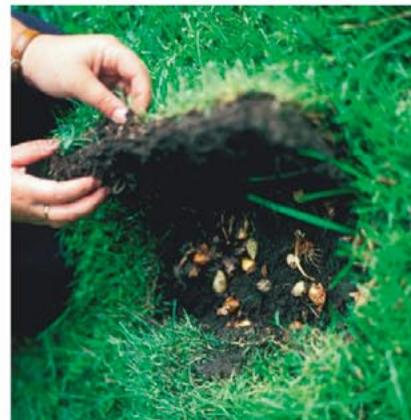
### step by step how to naturalise bulbs in lawns or verges



- With a sharp spade, cut a square of turf on three sides and peel back. Check soil, adding gypsum and organic matter if soil is heavy clay.



- Dot spring-flowering bulbs on the soil. Choose bulbs that require a shallow planting depth. Avoid overcrowding, as it affects flowering.



- Replace turf layer, and if dry, regularly water until the turf roots re-establish. Repeat in the remainder of your lawn or verge.



- In spring, once the bulbs have flowered, let the leaves brown off and wilt before mowing, to ensure repeat flowering the following year.

# 60 minutes

## 5 minutes

deadhead perennials and annuals to encourage another flush of blooms before winter



### plant

- Lift, divide and replant clumping perennials such as clivia, agapanthus and ginger (right) during the warm, autumn temperatures.
- Plant evergreen trees and shrubs now so they establish before the heat returns next summer.
- Plant spring-flowering bulbs. Store tulips (below) and hyacinths in paper bags in the fridge for 6–8 weeks. Don't keep with bananas or apples as they emit ethylene gas, which can spoil bulbs.
- Autumn is ideal for transplanting shrubs. Dig the largest root ball you can and replant to the same level. Apply liquid seaweed.
- Sow lawn seed and plant turf rolls to establish new lawns before winter.

### feed & water

- To rejuvenate soils, spread a handful of blood and bone for every square metre. Water in well then cover soil with mulch.
- Check soil pH if plants are struggling. They might not be able to access the available nutrients if the pH is out. Most plants like a neutral to slightly acidic soil (pH 6.5–7). Add chelated iron or sulfur to help reduce the pH if it's too high, or add lime or dolomite to raise pH where necessary.

### prune

- Trim summer-flowering shrubs as they finish flowering. Include hebe, abutilon, daisies and geraniums. Use prunings to propagate new plants.

### propagate

- Take cuttings of native plants such as boronia, correia, eriostemon, grevillea and prostanthera. Dip their bases into a hormone powder and put in a 1:1 sand and coir peat mix.

### special care

- Prepare for damaging wind by firmly staking tall perennials such as dahlia, tree dahlia, Mexican tree daisy (*Montanoa hibiscifolia*) and rudbeckia. Tie them back using broad, soft, flexible tying materials, such as pantyhose, to avoid stem damage.
- To control ant infestations in pots, submerge pots in a deep container filled with soapy water. Soak overnight, then lift and drain the container. Flush the excess soap out using clean water. If any ants survive, repeat a week later.



### pest alert

Be on the lookout for...

- **Scale on lillypilly.** Prune back heavy infestations then spray with a soap or oil spray during the cool of the day.
- **Frangipani rust on frangipani leaves.** Reduce spread of the disease by raking up and bagging fallen leaves, and putting them in the bin.
- **Aphids on new shoots.** Squash small outbreaks or use a soap spray.

For more pest and disease advice, see page 78.



### in the tropics

### plant

- To attract birds into your garden, consider planting Gymea lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*). It's an easy-to-grow Australian native with large flower spikes during spring and summer. Select a protected sunny position and plant in well-drained soil. Keep the soil moist and apply native fertiliser twice a year.
- Try planting lavender and rosemary in a large pot as they don't like wet feet. Move them to a drier spot during periods of heavy rain.

### feed & water

- Fertilise *Camellia japonica* in preparation for autumn flowering. Use a complete organic fertiliser, suitable for flowering plants.
- Give hibiscus a sprinkling of fertiliser, a good soaking and some fresh mulch. Apply a weak liquid fertiliser to the foliage once a fortnight and they will keep flowering for months.

### prune

- Tidy Mexican orange (*Choisya ternata*, above) by lightly pruning tips to reshape the bush.
- Roses are at their best in the dry season. Give them a medium to hard prune to promote new growth. Feed them, too, and you'll be rewarded with blooms in April and May.

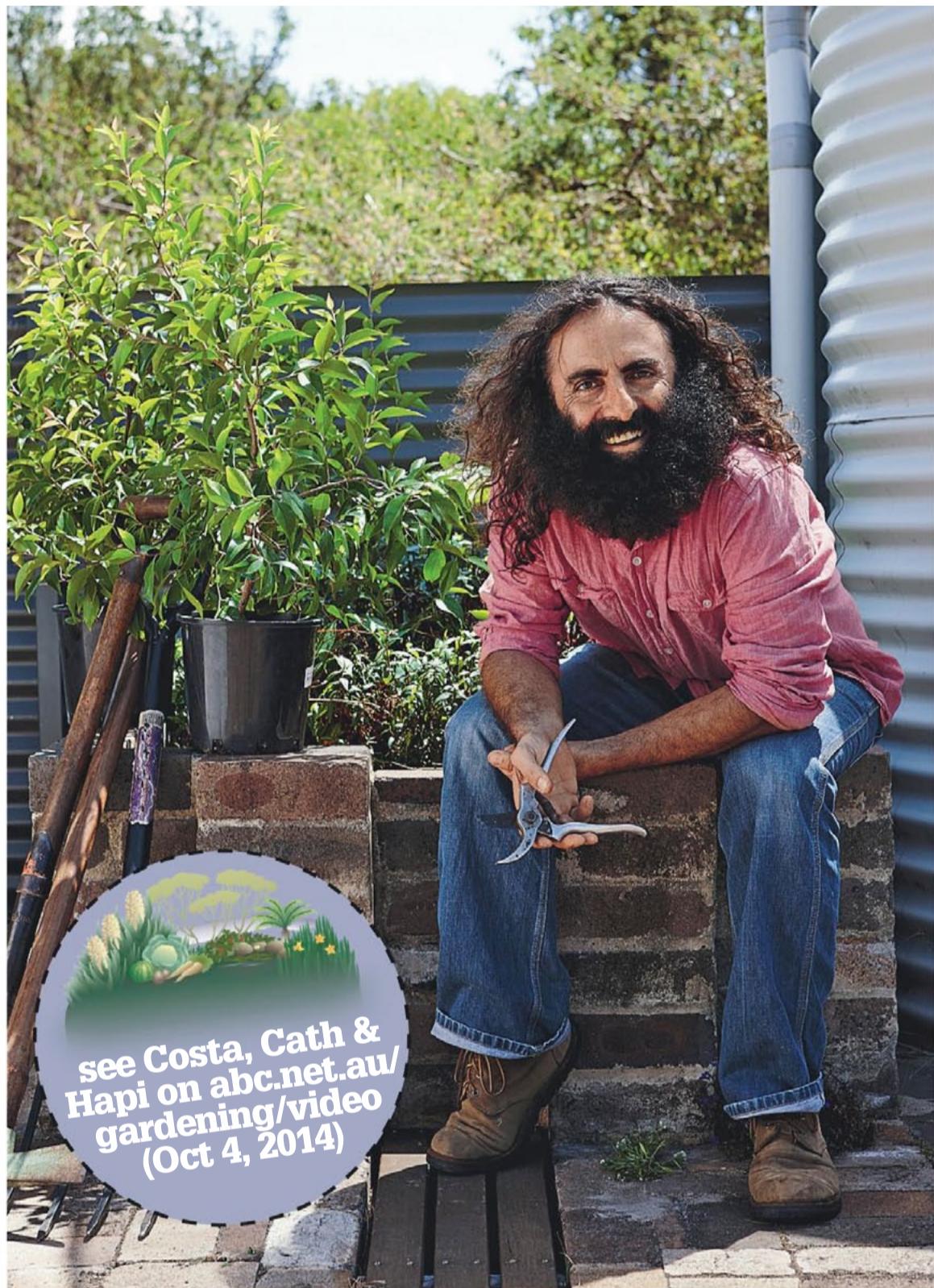
### propagate

- Take hardwood cuttings of acalyphas. Place the cuttings in propagating mix and keep moist. Colourful acalyphas make a reliable hedge in the tropics and the cuttings take readily.

### special care

- Check rex begonia for caterpillars, paying special attention to the core of the plant stem.

by costa georgiadis



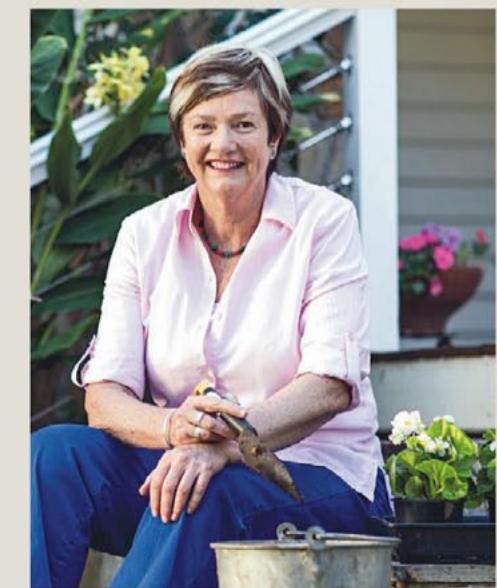
if I only have...

5  
minutes

### SHORT-ON-TIME GARDENING TIPS

- It's the perfect block of time to take some cuttings of correas, fuchsias, geraniums and pelargoniums. I'll put about 10 into a small pot filled with potting or propagating mix, then a few months later, when they have their roots, I'll move them out to their own pots.
- I love poring over hard-copy bulb catalogues. They're so enticing, with their lovely pictures and descriptions – I have them stored from years back. I love planning what I'm going to grow next.
- Perennials such as salvias, pelargoniums and some of the lavenders need pruning now. If my basil is going to seed, I'll nip out the flowers to keep them going just a little bit longer.

jane



PHOTOS DAMIAN BENNETT (COSTA)/VINCENT LONG (JANE)

## local beauties

**I**bet you'd be surprised to know just how many of the food products and fresh produce you eat daily are prepared in the suburbs surrounding Sydney. Jams in Newtown, shortbreads in Brookvale, preserves in Surry Hills, sauces in Alexandria, yoghurt in Bondi, dukkah in Five Dock, kombucha drinks in the Blue Mountains, verjuice in the Southern Highlands and olive oil across the mountains of Rylstone.

So, it's with great excitement that local vegie producers Cath and Hapi Fiefia from Field to Feast in Western Sydney have taken the leap and opened a store called The Urban Farmacy in Marrickville. Until now, they've been selling locally grown seasonal vegies at weekend markets, which has been great for those in the area; however, they thought it was time to make their produce available all seven days. Even better, in their new location, you'll also find produce and products of other local city-based food innovators. You can read more about them on their Field to Feast Facebook page.

This is just another example of how we can build local food systems, help feed local food economies, and develop employment opportunities right where people live. Thanks to people like Cath and Hapi, we can all support local food enterprises. I can't wait to see more and more producers added to the shelves in the future. **GA**



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living on  
**THE EDGE**

Take a tour of the relaxed cliff-top gardens at this Whale Beach home on the Northern Beaches of Sydney

**words by** RICHARD UNSWORTH **photography by** NICHOLAS WATT





### BLUE SKY DREAMING

#### Clockwise from left

The deck is the perfect place to relax; Geo screens define the rear, with cycads (back) and agaves (left); felt plant has a prehistoric look.



I often think that there are a lot of similarities between relationships with people and relationships with gardens. Great gardens take time to develop – nothing good generally comes from a 24-hour encounter (I'd like to see some of those 'makeover' show gardens after two years). If you neglect a garden, this generally leads to disaster, but too much attention or smothering can have the same effect. Gentle nurturing and sincere effort over a period of time usually produce the best results, and then the rewards can be huge.

We first started looking at this coastal garden about six years ago, when the clients were rebuilding, transforming the house from a humble beach house into a swanky coastal pad. Their aim was to create a weekend retreat, an oasis where they could come to relax and escape their busy schedules. My relationship with the garden has grown and endured over the intervening years, although unfortunately I don't manage to get there nearly as much as I would like to. Usually, I will visit a couple of times a year with Nicholas Vale, senior designer at Garden Life, to see if anything needs to be freshened up.

blackbutt decking. The owners enjoy entertaining, and wanted lots of seating and lounges around the pool, so we created big, wide, built-in day beds and added some round Dedon furniture. We placed three of our Geo screens on the boundary wall, creating a strong focal point and also providing privacy. Around the pool we used a series of large, wood-fired planters with cycads and succulents to green up and soften the corners and edges.

Lower down, we kept the sandstone terracing largely intact, as I wanted to retain some of the garden's informality. We rebuilt the stone walls, and improved access by creating a set of sandstone stairs at the far side of the terraces. For the floor surface we used a combination of crazy paving and gravel paths. The crunchy stones underfoot add great texture, and I love the sound and feel as you walk through; it's so relaxing. Hearing the ocean crashing on the cliffs and the soft crunch of gravel underfoot certainly takes your mind off the city.

The plants had to be tough and able to thrive in the exposed site. We developed a lush, coastal palette, with a loose Mediterranean influence, blending strong, architectural foliage with softer,

*"The overall scheme is plant-driven, as I didn't want to create a heavily 'designed' or contrived space; it had to be relaxed, loose and enticing"*

When I first visited the property, it was quite an adventure scrambling around the overgrown, terraced gardens leading down to the ocean cliffs. Although the gardens were a bit wild, I could see that at some stage they had been tended by a garden enthusiast. There were remnants of mature stone fruit specimens, such as peach, almond and mango trees, as well as banana trees, daffodils and even a few roses. Knowing the garden had previously been loved made me want to return it to its former glory. I loved the sense of rambling in this overgrown 'wilderness', and I wanted to preserve some of the magic of the space.

Most of the garden is at the rear of the house – full-length balconies stretch the width of the property, and the pool shimmers below, before the garden falls away steeply to the ocean. On the pool level we created a slick resort feel, installing elements like warm walnut travertine next to the

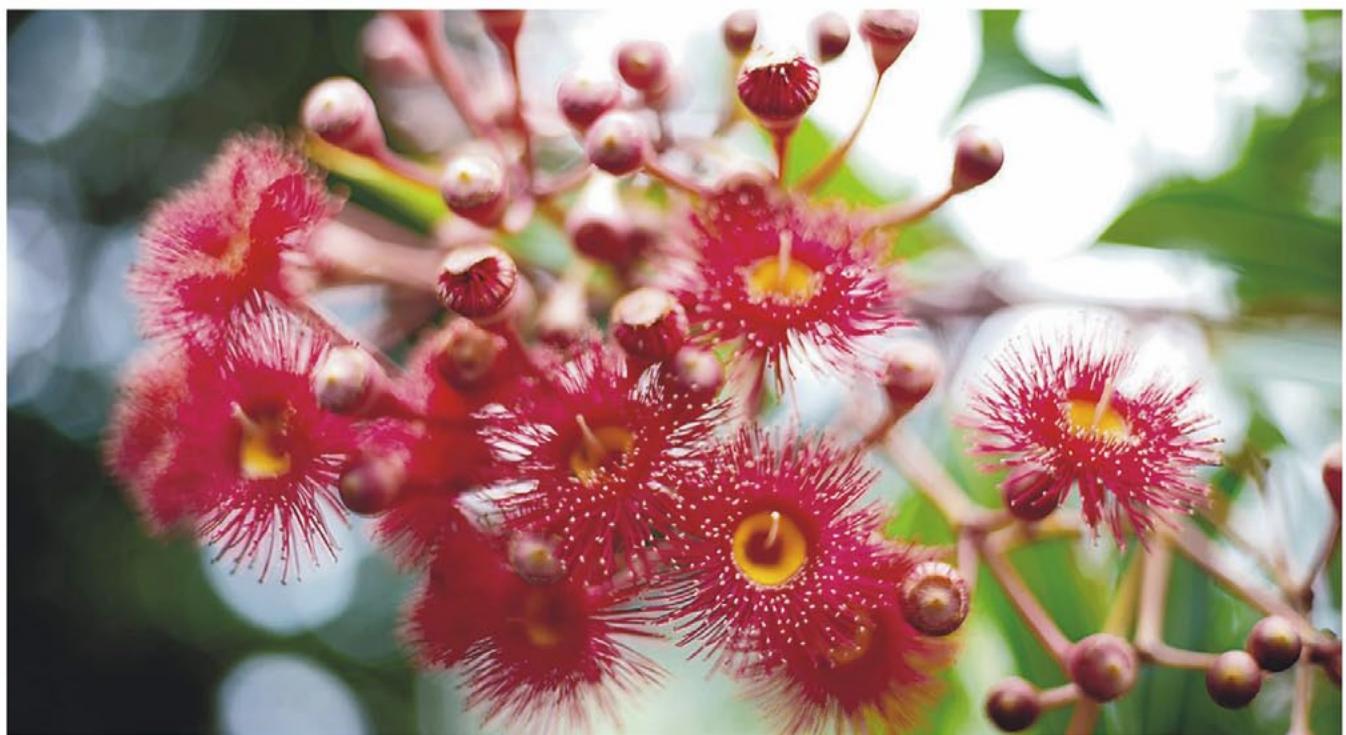
mounding clipped forms including succulents, native grasses and ferns in more sheltered spots. The overall scheme is plant-driven, as I didn't want to create a heavily 'designed' or contrived space; it had to be relaxed, loose and enticing. We created a timber pad at the base, overlooking the ocean, as our client wanted a place just in front of the cliffs, where he could work, or simply sit and contemplate life, the universe and everything in between.

We had to be ruthless with most of the original plants, which were generally in poor health and didn't work with the new planting scheme, but we did manage to save many of the smaller perennials, which we moved to more suitable positions. The garden now has a great sense of exploration and discovery. Walking down through the terraced gardens to the sea is a journey in itself, and it's a joy to just meander and lose yourself in it, as each twist reveals another aspect of the ocean below. ►

### TASTES & TEXTURES

#### Clockwise from top left

Contrasting plants in a roughly textured pot add instant appeal; banana plant creates a tropical feel; *corymbia ficifolia*; the intriguing and beautiful liquorice plant (*helichrysum petiolare*).



### coastal garden ideas

Natural tones and textures, such as greys, greens, bronzes and browns, all combine well to give that feeling of the sun-bleached tones of the coast in a slightly wilder aesthetic

#### KEY POINTS

Nowhere is plant selection more crucial than in the coastal garden. Plants here have to cope with a lot: exposure to the elements, high winds laden with salt, sandy soils with poor moisture retention and often full sun for most of the day. Choose your plants with care – it's a good idea to look at what is growing well in similar positions in nearby gardens. Smaller plants will cope better with rough conditions and are less susceptible to wind burn or physical harm. For the harder surfaces in a coastal garden, it's all about keeping things natural. Gravel paths are easy to install and feel fantastic underfoot. They literally slow you down and force you to relax! Timber is also a great choice. Allow decks to grey and weather naturally. As a general rule, timbers that start off red (for example, red gum), will eventually turn silver. Don't forget sandstone, which gives a soft, organic, coastal look. Keep the

style fairly loose and informal. Aim for a random dry-stone-wall feel, rather than using rigid, regular pieces all mortared together. Timber walls also work well as a cheaper option – try using treated pine sleepers. You could stain them black for a crisp, striking look. Or use wide decking timber, laid horizontally, as cladding.

#### PLANTING STYLE

Consider using plants which occur naturally on the coast, as they are likely to be more tolerant of prevailing conditions. This is especially true of trees and larger specimens, given their heightened exposure. As a general rule, group plants together in threes and fives for impact, choosing contrasting foliage to offset each other. Plants with silver foliage are usually tougher, and will withstand the salt air better than large-leaved green foliage. Softer clipping and informal shapes will look more natural than tightly clipped balls.



#### grasses

Pennisetum, poa and the grass-like lomandra are all tough and work well. They have movement and softness, and set off the moundings, clippables and architecturals (see right).

#### groundcovers

Loads of groundcovers and succulents are perfect for coastal plantings. Try blue chalksticks (*Senecio serpens*, left), giant pigface (*Carpobrotus acinaciformis*) and ice plant (*Lampranthus aurantiacus*). *Banksia integrifolia* 'Roller Coaster' is a great native groundcover in a coastal spot, as is *Casuarina glauca* 'Cousin-It' with its needle-like leaves and low, weeping growth.

#### moundings & clippables

Coastal rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*) is a nice choice for exposed areas as it's tough and responds well to pruning. Liquorice plant (*Helichrysum petiolare*) has soft, grey-green foliage. The cultivar 'Limelight' has a fresh, light-green foliage and is very hardy with a little shelter, although it's not as salt-tolerant as coastal rosemary. *Pittosporum* 'Miss Muffet' is tough and versatile, with a naturally mounding habit. It produces scented white flowers in summer. Blue jade (*Crassula 'Blue Bird'*) has grey-blue foliage



and is a tough, reliable performer. The regular, glossy, green-leaved common jade (*Crassula ovata*) is perfect for areas exposed to salt.

### trees

All banksias, including *Banksia integrifolia* (left), *B. serrata* and *B. robur*, work beautifully in coastal locations with their wild and natural habit. Coastal hibiscus (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) is softer, with flowers that change from yellow to orange to red in the course of their one-day life. Tuckeroo (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*) is a tough, small tree with yellow flowers great for screening in exposed areas.



### ADDING STRUCTURE

**Left** Use crazy paving with a rectilinear style along pathways to create a formal look.

## architecturals

Mauritius hemp (*Furcraea foetida*) is a striking succulent that is bombproof, and its dark green, sword-shaped leaves can grow up to 2m high. Firesticks (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) is an unusual-looking plant that's perfect for coastal locations, because the shrub has no leaves from which water can evaporate, and the vibrant green stems have modified to photosynthesise. Dragon tree (*Dracaena draco*, below) is another toughie with great form, which is ideally suited to coastal gardens. It prefers full sun. Felt plant (*Kalanchoe beharensis*) is one of my favourites. With its felt-like leaves 40cm across, it has wonderful sculptural value. It loves full sun and well-drained soil. The cultivar 'Oakleaf' has smaller leaves and is more compact, growing to 1m high. *Kalanchoe orgyalis* 'Copper Spoons' has texture and an oval leaf: bronze on top and silver underneath. ►



### coastal planting



#### SETTING THE SCENE

Giant bird of paradise foliage works well here, giving a tropical feel.

#### CLIPPED ELEMENTS

Mounding form of Indian hawthorn.

#### LUSH FOLIAGE

Rush-leaf bird of paradise is a tough flowering species ideal for coastal locations.

#### STRIKING FOLIAGE

Leaves of the red-edge screw pine (a species of pandanus) dominate the lower terrace.

#### GRAVEL PATHS

Paths feel wonderfully crunchy underfoot. They border these informal sandstone terraced walls.

#### BEDDING PLANTS

Echeverias grow easily among rocks and are ideal for coastal areas.

*"Great gardens take time to develop. Gentle nurturing and sincere effort over a period of time usually produce the best results, then the rewards can be huge"*

### SCULPTURAL

Architectural form of dragon tree stands out above the lower clipped foliage.

### EYE-CATCHING

Bronze cabbage palm foliage contrasts well with the grey and greens elsewhere in the garden.



### FLOWERS

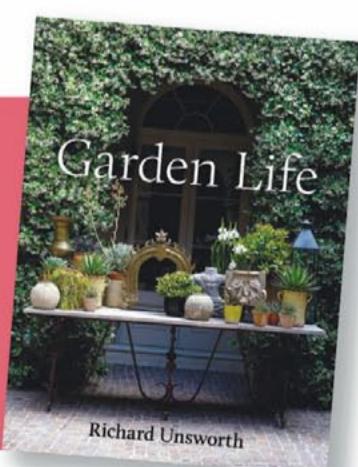
Coastal rosemary is a tough native that is well suited to this exposed position.

### RESCUED PLANTS

There were agapanthus throughout the existing garden – we moved them to more effective spots.

### more information

This is an edited extract of *Garden Life* by Richard Unsworth, Lantern, \$49.99. Richard Unsworth is a leading garden designer and garden writer who is also the owner of Sydney's renowned outdoor store, Garden Life. **GA**



## seasonal plants

by deryn thorpe





# bright bulbs

Not sure which bulbs will grow in your climate? Use this handy guide

Gardeners often associate bulbs with spring-flowering varieties that grow in cooler climates, but there are varieties that thrive in every part of Australia. We can use techniques to trick bulbs into flowering outside their climate zone, but the surest path to success is to choose varieties suited to your area.

Most bulbs are waterwise. Spring bulbs grow and flower with winter and spring rains, and die down in summer. Autumn-flowering bulbs shoot with the autumn rains and die back when it gets cold.

The more well-known bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils and Dutch iris, come from cooler parts of Europe and central Asia, so they grow well in southern and eastern Australia, the tablelands around Cairns, the hills west of Brisbane and the south-west corner of Western Australia. These can be bought now and planted in cool climates next month, or planted mid-May in hot areas.

I garden in Perth and, while most of these popular bulbs cope with my hot, dry conditions, I have more success with those from the Mediterranean regions of southern Africa and southern Europe, which are used to occasional water shortages.

## top choices

I have drifts of spring star flower, Spanish bluebell and snowflakes naturalising beneath my trees; and babiana, jonquil, chincherinchee, and the autumn-flowering nerine through my cottage gardens. However, the true survivors are the miniature gladiolus, freesia and belladonna lily that line the driveway where there's gutless, unimproved sand and no reticulation.

Other good varieties for naturalising include corn lily (*Ixia*), harlequin flower (*Sparaxis*), harvest brodiaea (*Brodiaea coronaria*), Cuban lily (*Scilla peruviana*) and cape cowslip (*Lachenalia*). All have weed potential, however, so avoid planting them near bushland. ►

PHOTO GAP

**“Bulbs must be fed regularly in their first growing season to enable flowers the following year”**

In early autumn I treat myself to bags of inexpensive anemones and ranunculi. I only get a handful of flowers the second year, but gardeners with loamy soil will have more success. It's worth the effort for just one year's flowers as they put on a prolific garden display.

In the tropics, you can only succeed with spring-flowering European bulbs by growing them as potted annuals. The secret is providing six to eight weeks' chilling in the refrigerator before planting so the bulbs believe they have been through a cold winter. This method is also recommended for areas of Australia without regular frosts. Chilled bulbs such as daffodils, tulips, hyacinth, crocus and Dutch iris grow taller, germinate sooner and flower earlier than unchilled bulbs. In the tropics, keep them out of the rain and bring them inside when they start blooming.

There are a number of bulbs that do well in a tropical garden with minimal care. These include blood lily (*Haemanthus*), *Crinum*, fire lily (*Cyrtanthus*), Jacobean lily (*Sprekelia*), *Hippeastrum*, society garlic (*Tulbaghia*), *Habranthus*, spider lily (*Hymenocallis*) and rainflower (*Zephyranthes*). Native bulbs such as the Brisbane lily (*Proiphys cunninghamii*), garland lily (*Calostemma purpureum*) and swamp lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*) are all trouble free and create a lush, tropical look.

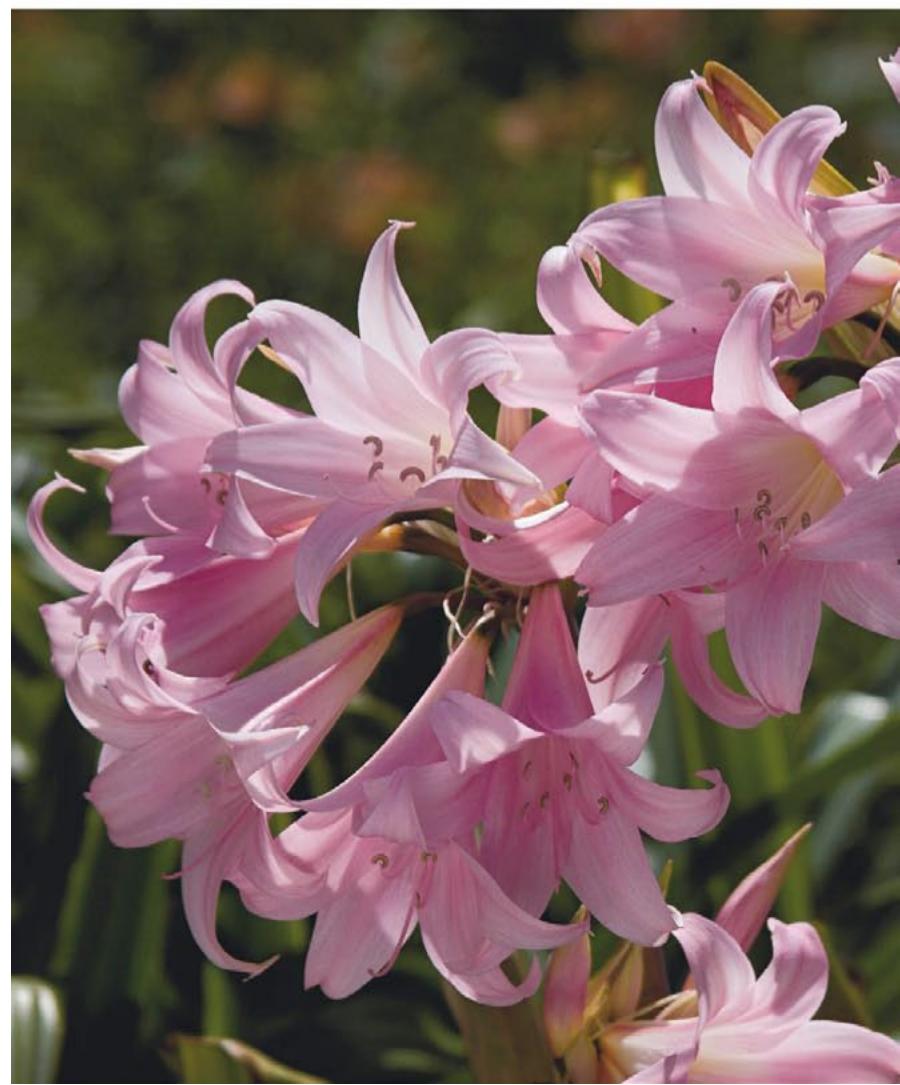
### growing advice

Newly purchased bulbs have stored nutrients to support flowers the first year after planting. However, they must be fed regularly during their first growing season to enable flowers the following year.

Bulbs need well-drained soil with a generous supply of humus. Complete fertiliser high in phosphorus and potash must be worked in well in advance and not allowed to touch the bulb. Alternatively, enrich the soil with lots of organic matter and add blood and bone when flower buds appear. If you're planting only a few bulbs, it's easiest to buy a small bag of bulb-growing mix.

Plant bulbs to a depth that's twice their height – a bit deeper in sandy soil and warm areas – and two-bulb widths apart for a clumped effect. Put bulbs into the soil with the pointy end up, except ranunculus and anemone, which should be planted pointy end down.

When flowers finish, continually feed bulbs with liquid fertiliser until the foliage dies down to supply bulbs with food for next year's flowers. Tulips should be lifted annually when their leaves have completely withered. ►



PHOTOS GARDEN WORLD IMAGES & GAP



Here are five top bulb choices for those living in hot, dry areas, cool zones, and the tropics.

### Key

- full sun
- semi-shade
- shade
- suitable for pots
- frost resistant

### mediterranean

- **baboon flower** (*Babiana stricta*) Plant at least 15cm deep. Leave in the ground to multiply. Ribbed hairy leaves and pink to purple cup-shaped blooms. Flowers in late spring.  
↔ 10cm ↑ 15–30cm ☀️ ☁️ ☀️
- **belladonna lily** (*Amaryllis belladonna*) Summer-dormant, autumn flowering. White or pink scented flowers on tall stems followed by strappy leaves. Prefers sun. Plant with neck exposed. Leave to multiply; no supplementary water needed when dormant.  
↔ 30–50cm ↑ 60cm ☀️ ☁️
- **ranunculus** (*Ranunculus* spp.) Suits all climates except tropical. Poppy-like, ruffled, semi-double and double blooms in all colours except blue. Excellent as cut flowers. Plant 5cm deep with claws facing downwards.  
↔ 12cm ↑ 40–50cm ☀️ ☁️ ☀️ ☃️
- **snowflake** (*Leucojum aestivum*) Leave undisturbed for years, plant in drifts beneath trees. Masses of dainty white bells with green dots on petal tips in late winter to spring.  
↔ 30cm ↑ 45–55cm ☀️ ☁️ ☁️
- **spring star flower** (*Ipheion uniflorum*) Star-shaped faces pointing upwards. Usually blue; white also available. Produced from mid-winter to mid-spring. Linear foliage. Weed potential.  
↔ 15–20cm ↑ 5cm ☀️ ☁️ ☁️ ☃️

### THE MANY FACES OF BULBS

Clockwise from far left *Leucojum aestivum* 'Gravetye Giant' look great in drifts; *Babiana stricta* flower late spring; *Ranunculus asiaticus* 'Gambit Mix' make excellent cut flowers; the autumn-flowering *Amaryllis belladonna*.



# seasonal plants

## ODL

■ **daffodil** (*Narcissus* spp.) Bright yellow, cream or yellow/orange blooms with central trumpet. Includes miniatures. Leave to naturalise if soil drains freely.

↔ 15cm ↑ 10–60cm ☀️ ☁️ ☀️ ☀️

■ **Dutch iris** (*Iris* Dutch hybrids) Blue, purple, yellow or white flowers with three main petals in tall stems and very fine foliage. Excellent cut flower; prefers wind protection. Plant in clumps.

↔ 12cm ↑ 60–80cm ☀️ ☁️ ☀️ ☀️

■ **saffron crocus** (*Crocus sativus*) Purple autumn flowers, with three golden stigmas per bloom, harvested for saffron. Needs winter-spring rain and dry summers.

↔ 10cm ↑ 40cm ☀️ ☁️ ☀️ ☀️

■ **snake's head fritillary** (*Fritillaria meleagris*) Square-shouldered bell flower with checkered, maroon colouring. Needs fertile soil with damp summers. Prefers semi-shade beneath deciduous trees.

↔ 5cm ↑ 40cm ☁️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️

■ **tulip** (*Tulipa* spp.) Spectacular flowers that come in all colours and many forms. Best lifted and stored after flowering. Stems are shorter in warm climates.

↔ 15cm ↑ 20–80cm ☀️ ☁️ ☀️ ☀️



**WHEN IN BLOOM**  
Clockwise from  
top left *Fritillaria*  
*meleagris*; *Iris*  
'Professor Blaauw';  
*Crocus sativus*.



**STANDOUTS**  
*Cyrtanthus elatus*.  
Below *Hymenocallis*  
*speciosa*. Far right  
*Hippeastrum papilio*.



## tropical

■ **amaryllis** (*Hippeastrum* hybrid cultivars) Plant with necks out of the ground. Spring/summer flowering, big blooms with single, double or spider flowers. Prefers full sun but tolerates semi-shade. Great in a pot. Needs shelter from frost and rain in winter.

↔ 40cm ↑ 40–60cm ☀️ ☁️ ☀️

■ **blood lily** (*Haemanthus coccineus*) Red, cup-shaped blooms with yellow stamens in autumn and two, huge, strappy or tongue-like leaves after flowering. Beware: many are toxic to humans and animals.

↔ 50cm–1.5m ↑ 15–40cm ☀️ ☁️ ☀️

■ **Scarborough lily** (*Cyrtanthus elatus* syn. *Vallota speciosa*) Evergreen strappy foliage with orange-red, funnel-shaped blooms in summer/autumn. Popular cut flower. Feed weekly.

↔ 30cm ↑ 45cm ☀️ ☁️ ☀️

■ **spider lily** (*Hymenocallis* spp.) Fine white flowers with long curled petals in summer. Strappy foliage; flowers best in sun.

↔ 25cm ↑ 60cm ☀️ ☁️ ☁️ ☀️ ☀️

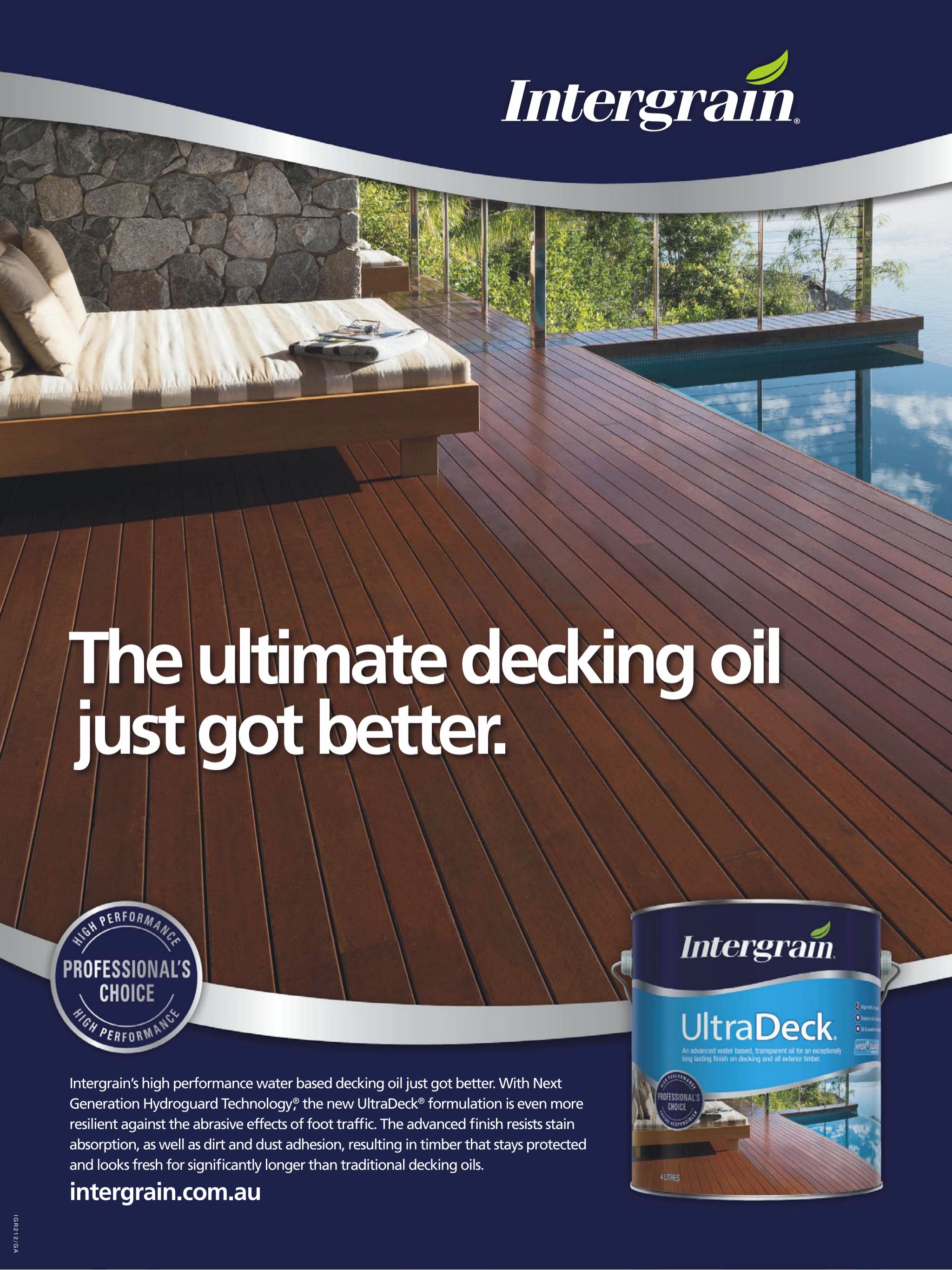
■ **swamp lily** (*Crinum pedunculatum*) Unfussy native for swampy or saline soils and coastal positions. Clusters of white fragrant flowers in spring and summer.

↔ 2–4m ↑ 1–2.5m ☀️ ☁️ ☀️ ☀️ GA





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know how

by lynne testoni

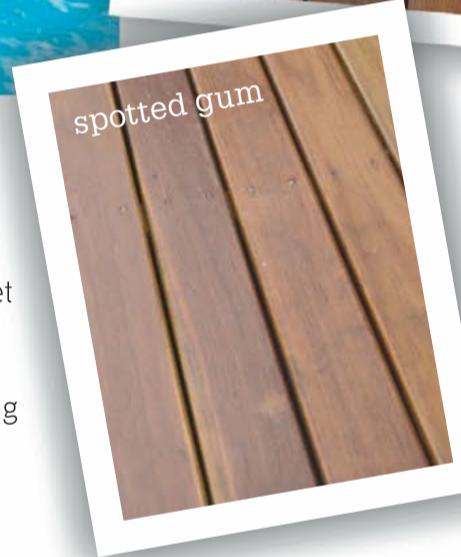
# top decks

Make the most of the long days and warm weather by kicking back, or entertaining guests, on your nicely spruced up deck



## ALL DECKED OUT

When choosing a decking wood, look for hard-wearing and weather-resistant species such as the ones below.



**A** lazy Sunday afternoon taking it easy in the backyard, sitting on the deck and surveying the garden – it's the great Australian dream. All you need is the aroma of a barbecued steak to complete the picture. However, if your deck is showing signs of wear and tear – and grabbing your attention – it's time to take action. Here are a few tips on how to renew, refresh and repair it so you can concentrate on the important things in life, such as relaxing (and gardening)!

### wood works

Treated pine and hardwood timbers are the best types of wood for exterior decking as they are hard-wearing and weather-resistant, according to Bunnings national timber and panel buyer, Adam Morton. He recommends popular species such as blackbutt and spotted gum, which have a natural fire resistance, making them safe in bushfire areas or for use under a barbecue. Alternatively, consider composite decking, made with vinyl resins. These new products look like timber, need little maintenance and can have anti-slip properties, making them a common choice for poolsides. However, for the purists, it's timber or nothing.

### new kids on the block

New timber requires special treatment – generally it needs a month or so for the natural oils to seep through before you can clean it and apply an oil stain. Check with your

timber merchant first to ascertain the age of the wood. However, if you don't want to wait, there are some new wood care products on the market that allow you to treat new timber by drawing out tannins and oils quickly to remove them from the surface, allowing you to apply a stain immediately.

### stop the rot

It's a good idea to regularly check the timber in your deck for signs of rotting and mildew – especially after winter. Try to push a screwdriver into the deck. If it goes more than half a centimetre through the wood, it may be rotting and need replacing. Areas located in the shade are the best places to look for rotting timber or mildew, so tackle those first.

### clean sweep

Timber decks and stairs should be cleaned of dirt, mould and moss regularly with a specialist deck cleaner. First, sweep the deck thoroughly with a stiff broom, then use the same broom to scrub the deck with a suitable cleaner. Hose it off afterwards, following the directions on the cleaning product. If your deck gets plenty of sunlight and has good ventilation, it should only be necessary to clean it once a year, but if it is shaded or gets a lot of foot traffic, a scrub every six months might be necessary. Cleaning it not only removes mildew and prevents rot, it also improves the look of the timber. ►



Timber decks should be cleaned of dirt, mould and moss regularly with a specialist deck cleaner

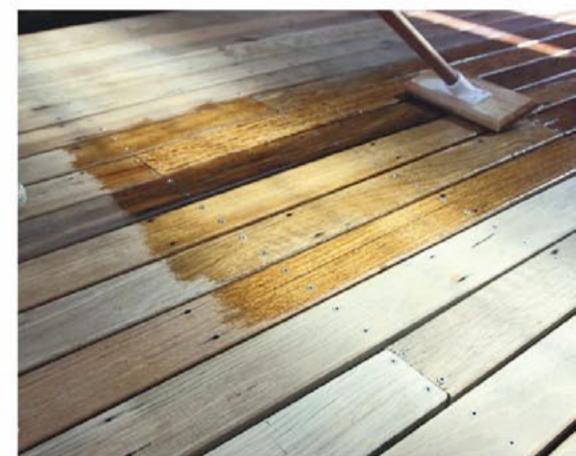
### repairs

Over time, all decking will have loose nails or timber panels. And, of course, nothing ruins a child's afternoon running about in the backyard more than an unwelcome splinter. Check all timber underfoot and any handrails thoroughly for splintering, and sand back (if needed) before cleaning. Replace any damaged boards and pay attention to nails sticking out or screws that have come loose. A hammer will fix most problems. Perform this sort of maintenance twice a year – at the onset of spring and autumn.

### protect

After cleaning, it's important to protect the deck from future damage and the effects of the sun. The best option is a good quality deck stain. Timber should be prepared with a thorough clean and sweep, then two to three coats of an oil-based stain. Check the weather before you start work as rain showers during application will affect the end result. Look for a stain with superior UV protection. Apply with a cloth or wool-covered mop, allowing it to dry between coats. For maintenance, it may be only necessary to apply a top-up coat annually to protect the timber. Not sure of what





your timber deck will look like after a stain is applied? If you use a clear stain, you can splash a bit of water on it beforehand to get a glimpse of the final product. If you wish to darken the timber a little, add colour to the final stain. Alternatively, you can let the natural hues of the timber shine through. Another option, increasingly popular, is to let the timber grey naturally. If you choose this option, however, be aware that the timber will still need regular cleaning and occasional oiling to ensure that it doesn't become brittle or split, especially if it is exposed to strong sun and wind conditions.

### green alert

While potted plants placed in groupings on your deck add colour and personality to an entertaining space, they can increase the incidence of mould and mildew on a timber deck. Reposition your pots regularly (at least

every six months) and check the decking wood underneath. Remove any fungus or mould you spot with hot soapy water and a scrub brush. If necessary, apply a specialist decking cleaning product to ensure that it's cleaned thoroughly. This is also a good tip for any outdoor furniture. Ensure that any pot plants have adequate drainage to minimise spillage.

### safety first

All timber stairs and wet areas should be cleaned regularly to ensure mould and mildew don't take hold. This reduces the risk of slipping or falling. If it's an area that attracts damp or moss, consider sanding any steps to maintain a non-slip surface. There are also staining products available that have additional anti-slip qualities for pool areas and stairs, or you can buy specially devised slip-resistance additives to go in regular timber coatings. **GA**



# how to build a rain garden

A rain garden works harder than the average garden, and it's relatively simple to construct and maintain. It also functions as a stormwater filtration system

**A**lthough you may not spot them at first, rain gardens are popping up all over our cities. They look and act much like regular gardens, but there's one main difference: they filter stormwater from impervious surfaces such as driveways, roads, footpaths and roofs using layers of soil and gravel for filtration, along with a mix of plants to absorb nutrients and water.

Each year in Australia, an enormous amount of stormwater goes down the drain. In Melbourne alone, more than 500 billion litres of stormwater are washed into local waterways annually, taking with them any pollution picked up along the way. This includes such things as litter, oil and grease, heavy metals, chemicals, concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorus, and damaging sediment.

Although we often don't think of our backyards and driveways as catchment areas for our local rivers and creeks, this is what they are. So, to help maintain the health of our waterways, it's important to start with our own property, and one of the most effective methods to do this is to install a rain garden at home.

Any site is suitable for a rain garden, regardless of its soil type or slope (although there are a few regulations to adhere to). Rain gardens can be as big or small as your backyard or budget allows. They can be quite inexpensive and easy to build, attractive, low maintenance and cost-effective to run.

## types of rain gardens

There are two types of rain gardens: lined and unlined. Lined gardens have a plastic membrane with an outlet pipe at the base that feeds the cleaned water back into the stormwater system. Unlined gardens, as the

name implies, aren't contained by a membrane and percolate the water to surrounding areas, replenishing groundwater. While there are a few factors to consider, it's the location of your rain garden that will determine which design to adopt.

A rain garden can be any shape, and can be built wherever stormwater can be captured. It could be a raised planter box below a downpipe, the overflow to a rainwater tank, a swale or trench-style garden on the verge. It can also be planted out to suit the rest of your garden. As Dr Chris Walsh from The Waterway Ecosystem Research Group says, there are plenty of options. "Depending on the design of the rain garden, it can be a feature containing wetland plants or a more conventional-looking garden, either ornamental or productive. Independent of the design, it's a part of your garden that requires little or no watering. If you have a rain garden that includes large, shady trees or vines, it can be a very effective means of keeping your property cool during hot summers."

## where and how

There are a few restrictions on where rain gardens can be situated. Although the specifics change from council to council, in general there should be at least 5m between an unlined side of a rain garden and the nearest building, to avoid causing damage to foundations. Other factors to consider before digging are the location of your home's services, such as gas and electricity, and whether your rain garden will reconnect to stormwater pipes, in which case you'll need the help of a licensed plumber. If situated far enough away from buildings, rain gardens can be as simple as a hole in the ground filled with loamy soil. ▶





### RUNNING DRY

Rain gardens often appear dry, unless they've just received a large amount of rain.



Once established, a rain garden doesn't require watering, fertilising or mowing, making it a trouble-free addition

The size of your rain garden depends on the amount of run-off received. The rule of thumb is to allocate 3m<sup>2</sup> for every 100m<sup>2</sup> of hard surfaces to be drained, so if you're collecting run-off from the roof of your house, a rain garden that's 3–4m<sup>2</sup> should be ample. Having the proper drainage is essential. Rain gardens should only be full during and shortly after a heavy rain event. Outside of these times, a rain garden should appear dry.

Depending on the type of rain garden, you'll need to install a raised bed or excavate a trench. If it's in-ground, dig the hole sloping away from buildings. After lining, lay perforated pipe connected to an overflow pipe, and fill with layers of drainage material and soil, finishing with a layer of pebbles or gravel mulch (see right). Avoid using organic mulches, as they become compacted or wash away in time. Another tip is to place large stones under pipe outlets to distribute water flow and limit erosion.

### plant selection

Plants that do well in a rain garden tend to like dry conditions but can tolerate brief periods of inundation. The species that local councils often use are usually perennials and have extensive fibrous root systems. These plants offer the best filtration service. Nicolas McGay from Melbourne Water recommends the top 10 species listed in the box (above), interspersed with other waterwise plants. These top species have proven to be good at removing pollutants from stormwater.

However, you're not limited to native plants. At the Burnley Campus of the University of Melbourne, rain gardens are filled with edibles. Regardless of the type of plants you choose, select those suitable for the location of your rain garden, and have their shade or sun needs met. If you're stuck for ideas, your local nursery should be able to advise on the best plants for your area.



**NATIVE PICKS**  
**Opposite page,**  
**clockwise from left**  
*Lomandra hystrix*; a  
rain garden in situ;  
a planter box rain  
garden. **This page,**  
**from left** Red kangaroo  
paw; rain gardens act  
as water catchments.

## maintenance

One of the many benefits of setting up a rain garden is that they are very low maintenance. Once established, a rain garden doesn't require watering, fertilising or mowing, making it a trouble-free addition to an existing garden. During prolonged dry spells, occasional watering may be necessary. Watch out for signs of stress, such as wilting leaves on plants.

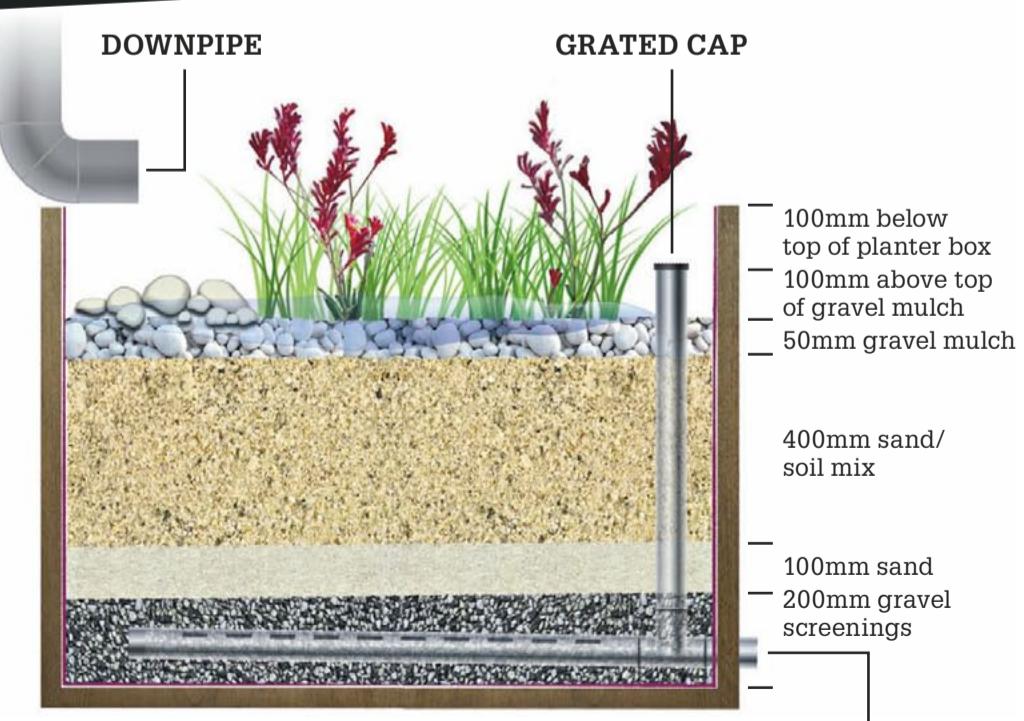
It's worth considering installing a rain garden as your next weekend project. You don't need to be an engineer to build one, and the benefits to the environment are immense. Not only do rain gardens help to recharge local groundwater and keep pollutants from entering our waterways, but they can increase the habitat opportunities for native wildlife and reduce gardening time, so you can put your feet up sooner. **GA**



### more details

For instructions on how to build a rain garden, visit [melbournewater.com.au/raingardens](http://melbournewater.com.au/raingardens).

## planter box cross-section



outdoor living

# backward sanctuary

words by LOUISE McDAID photography by NATALIE HUNFALVAY

This secluded haven in Sydney's eastern suburbs offers its owners and extended family a spot to relax, share food and play





**V**isit the Clark family home on a summer's evening and you'll likely find Tash Clark in the garden. Her husband, Ivan, and children Finnegan, 8, and Clancy, 4, might be hanging around too, and some of their friends or extended family. Tash has deployed her various talents as an architect, interior designer and gardener to create this stylish, comfortable outdoor space where visitors are invited to put up their feet, relax on the sofa, read or join those at the table for whatever project is on.

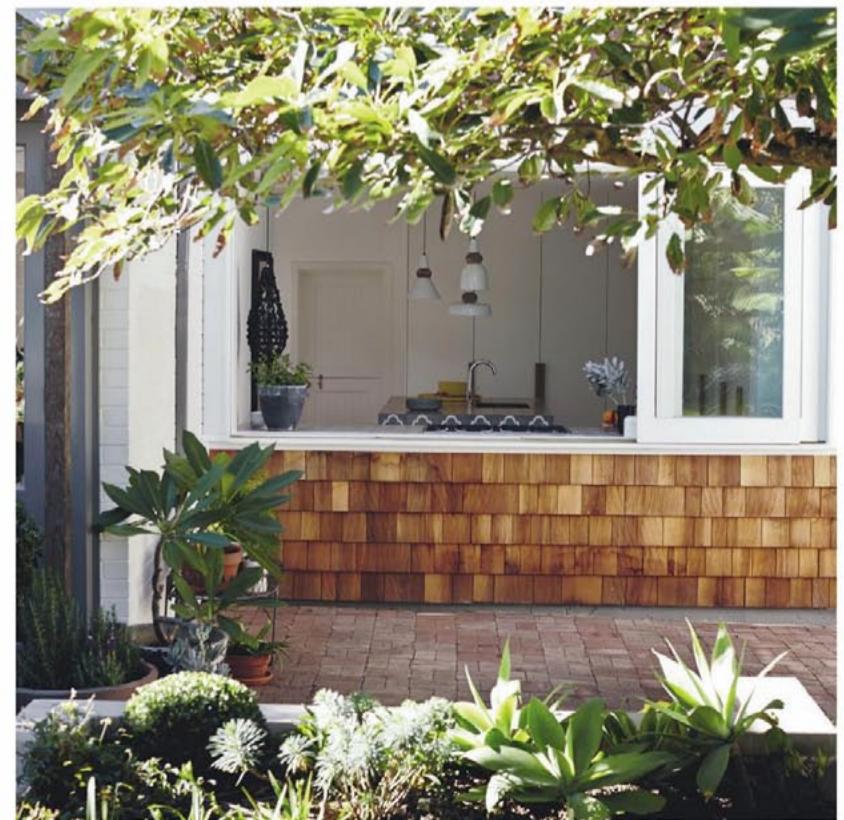
"It's a delight to have somewhere with an outdoor sofa where you can happily sit in the evening," says Tash. She believes you can't furnish an outdoor space enough. Putting furniture in your garden, she says, invites people to be 'in it', so you don't end up with a beautiful garden that's never used.

Tucked away in Sydney's Rose Bay, the garden is an alluring mix of perfumed plants, edibles and herbs. Chinese star jasmine twines over the pergola to create a perfumed canopy, particularly fragrant in the evening, when the garden is most heavily used. Gardenias and magnolia provide a heady scent, too, and a patch of aromatic herbs adds a fine, earthy contrast. When the kids run through it, the pungency of the thyme and rosemary invades your senses.

The garden is surrounded by a wall that creates such a sense of seclusion that the city beyond almost ceases to exist. Tash loves to grow things on the ►

### PRETTY DETAILS

**Right** A favourite spot for the morning cuppa and 'time out'. **Below** Rustic, mismatched pots, planted up with jade plant, frangipani, kalanchoe and lavender. **Below right** An avocado tree shades the kitchen window from hot afternoon sun.





- 3
- 4



## plant a succulent tray

1. **Echeveria** The pink-grey of their rosette leaves pick up the pinks of the cyclamen.
2. **Cyclamen** They may not be a succulent, but the pinks and variegated leaves of the cyclamen complement the succulents here.
3. **Crassula** The frilled leaf edges and flower spikes add interest.
4. **Sedum** As this ground-hugging sedum grows in place, it will climb over the pot's edge.

**Succulents are so much fun and give immediate satisfaction. You can create an instant display that forgives you for baking it in the sun**

wall – everything from ivy to tomatoes to *Ficus pumila*. The overall effect is of a verdant, feminine secret garden, reminiscent of the Moorish paradise gardens.

The greenery surrounds the house, which is in the beautiful old Queen Anne style, and connects with the indoors, providing a seamless indoor-outdoor flow. The glass doors and large windows of the kitchen and living area provide a vista onto the garden, and good outdoor lighting makes the garden come alive at night, too. The garden follows you inside, with large, well-placed potted succulents in the living room, and the green theme repeated in the artwork and furnishings.

It's a relaxed, inviting space, and a haven for Tash and Ivan's large extended family, many of whom live close by. They quite often have an impromptu 10 or so people visiting. Tash says, "The thing in summer is you don't know when you're going to eat. It's such a lovely spot to linger with friends and family while the kids play. Then the eating happens at some stage."

Tash loves having the kids running about when she's pottering in the garden. "As a family we get a pretty big hoot out of it. Just this morning there were shrieks – the birds had taken all the strawberries! Lucky birds. We'll make sure there are some for us later." **GA**





"We love to steam freshly picked corncobs in their husks on the barbecue before smothering them in butter, lime zest and fresh red chilli. They go beautifully with a garden salsa of cucumber, avocado, green onion, cherry tomato, lime juice and more chilli!" Phil

# the kitchen garden

## pear

*Pyrus communis* A deciduous tree with edible fruit

### Varieties

Beurré Bosc, Corella Forelle, Josephine de Malines, Packham's Triumph, Sensation, Williams' Bon Chrétien, and Winter Nelis.

### Planting & care

Pears prefer cool to temperate climates. Plant two compatible varieties to maximise pollination. Bare-rooted specimens are planted

in winter. Pears prefer deep, well-drained, moderately fertile soil. Create a planting mound to improve drainage. Water deeply in dry times and fertilise in spring, summer and early autumn. Prune in summer to remove inward and excessive growth.

### Harvesting & storing

Start harvesting when fruit snap

easily from the tree and ripen in a warm room or paper bag. Unripe fruit will store in a fridge for weeks – remove to ripen as needed.

### Nutrition

A good source of antioxidants, fibre, minerals and vitamins.

Turn to page 64 for some delicious pear recipes.

## flavour fixer

**Garlic is a must-have item for most cooks as it turns a simple dish into something special. Here's how to grow your own**

**I**f you're a real garlic lover, like me, you probably throw six or more cloves into a dish when the recipe asks for one. I add it to just about everything. My latest fix is garlic sliced atop warm peanut butter toast – try it!

But there's a serious side to eating garlic. Most garlic consumed in Australia is imported and treated with highly toxic substances, such as methyl bromide, as well as growth inhibitors that stop bulbs from shooting in storage. So, it makes good sense to only buy locally grown

**"Ensure you have healthy planting stock of proven performers in your area. The easiest way is to pick up big, solid, healthy cloves at a farmers' market"**

organic garlic, and use some of it to grow a little of your own. You can grow it in most areas and March is the time to start.

### good stock

Garlic is normally grown from individual cloves. Ensure you have healthy planting stock of proven performers in your area. The easiest approach is to pick up big, solid, healthy cloves at a farmers' market. Also check out nurseries or mail-order suppliers. Many varieties suit cool zones where most garlic grows. In a warm area, try Glenlarge or Southern Glen.

Once they're planted, the cloves sprout and develop very quickly. You won't see a lot of bulb development in the early

months – mainly leaf and root growth. The bulbs begin to swell as spring approaches, and the days get longer and warmer.

### harvest and storage

Despite the early growth spurt, it takes about 7–8 months for garlic to fully mature. The bulbs are almost ready when the lower leaves turn brown. If you're not sure, scrape back some soil to see if they're well formed, with clearly defined

cloves. If so, stop watering and prepare to harvest in about two weeks. A bit of water stress at this stage causes the bulbs to form tight layers of protective skin, which means they store better. Don't wait too long to harvest, or the bulbs may split into individual cloves. They don't store as well as tight bulbs do, but they're still edible, so eat them first.

Shake or wash off excess soil and hang bunches of 5–10 plants to dry in an airy spot under cover. Don't remove the leaves – their goodness is absorbed back into the bulbs. Start eating 'green garlic' straightaway. For storing, it needs to be left hanging for eight weeks or so. After that, you can plait them, or cut off the



leaves to within 3cm of the bulb and store them in a net sling or shallow box in a cool, dry room where they'll keep for months. Be sure to set aside some of your harvest for next year's planting.

### misshapen bulbs

Sometimes garlic bulbs don't form properly, and all you get is one large, roundish clove. This can happen when garlic is planted too late in the season, when the planting stock is small or if the temperatures are too high in the early swelling stage. These can be eaten or stored as normal, and if they are planted out the following autumn, they will grow on and form bulbs of multiple cloves. **GA**



1. Split bulbs into cloves and plant in well-prepared soil 2–5cm deep. Space 10–15cm apart in rows 15–40cm apart.

2. Once cloves start growing, water and feed the plants regularly to encourage strong, rapid growth. Keep on top of competitive weeds.



3. After 7–8 months, bulbs are ready to harvest. Stop watering when bulbs are formed. Pull up plants two weeks later.



4. Shake off excess soil, and hang bunches of 5–10 plants to dry and cure for 8 weeks. Plait or trim the foliage before storing.

## step by step

## growing essentials

### Common name

garlic

### Botanical name

*Allium sativum*



■ suitable

↑ 40–50cm

↔ 15–25cm

☀ full sun

🕒 March to June

🕒 7–8 months

## growing tips

■ **Soil preparation** Garlic prefers light, well-drained soil enriched with organic matter. Dig in plenty of compost or well-rotted manure, along with a fistful of sulfate of potash per square metre, 3 or more weeks before planting. If your soil is acidic (pH below 5.8), add a handful of lime per square metre. Mound heavy soils in rows to improve drainage.

■ **Planting** Plant in March, or in April in warm areas. Break open bulbs to separate the cloves. Don't remove paper covering. Select the biggest cloves to grow bigger bulbs. Plant them 2cm below the surface (5cm in the coldest zones) with points facing upwards – that's where shoots form. Space cloves 10–15cm apart in rows 15–40cm apart. Water in well, and cover the bed with mulch.

■ **Watering and fertilising** Water sparingly at first, as cloves are prone to rot, then increase watering as plants develop. Fertilise with blood and bone in early winter and late winter. Supplement with fortnightly applications of liquid seaweed. Stop fertilising when bulbs start to swell. Keep on top of weeds.

■ **Pests and diseases** Aphids and mites may attack foliage. Control these with soap or pyrethrum sprays. Garlic diseases can be devastating, but are rare in home gardens if the soil drainage and planting stock are good and you practise crop rotation. Lift and burn diseased plants to avoid a disease build-up.

# what to grow in a TINY SPACE



Believe it or not, you don't need a lot of room to grow your own vegies – you just have to be smarter when it comes to plant choice. SOPHIE THOMSON suggests you start with these 10 great, small-space vegies

When it comes to growing vegies in tiny spaces, plant selection is critical. It's possible to be productive in just 1–2m<sup>2</sup> of garden in a courtyard or patio, or on a rooftop or balcony. It might be a plot in the ground, a raised planter or wicking bed, a series of large pots, or a vertical garden system.

In small vegie gardens it's essential that you choose 'good value' vegetables that are highly

productive in a limited space. Avoid vegies that take up a lot of space over a long period, such as the large-headed cabbages and cauliflower. As soon as one crop, planting or variety is finished, remove it, improve the soil and plant again.

All of these vegies grow best in rich, fertile soil so make sure you get it right before you plant, and don't let your plants become water stressed, or your crops will suffer.



## 1 lettuces

The loose leaf or 'cut and come again' lettuces are best harvested by picking off individual leaves as required, however, you can cut the whole head off when mature at about eight weeks, if you choose. When planting, space seedlings 20–30cm apart and aim to make a new planting four weeks later to keep a constant supply of these 'cut and come again' salad essentials. They can be grown in full sun to semi-shade. An average family requires 9 to 12 plants per planting.



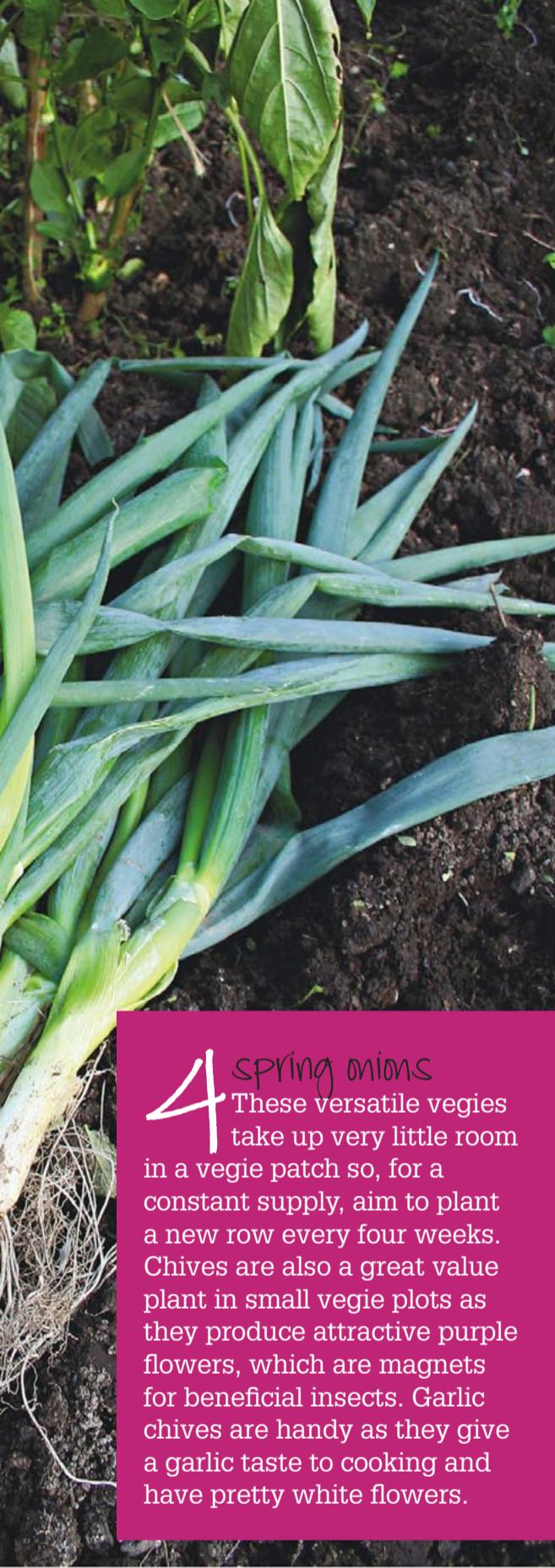
## 2 tomatoes

Tomatoes are great in small spaces as you can grow them up frames or a trellis, or, in the case of bush varieties, hanging over the edge of the garden bed. Sun is essential to get tomatoes to fruit properly, however, too much and they'll suffer. For early fruit, the cherry types are best, however, if you can, choose a cherry type and a larger variety. Plant in spring for summer and autumn cropping.

## 3 climbing peas

These grow well on a trellis and can be squeezed into small vegie patches. You can choose from snow peas, sugar snap peas or shelling peas. All taste delicious straight off the vine, so beware that the numbers that make it to the kitchen are often far less than the amount that was actually harvested! Peas are best sown from autumn to spring, although frosts will affect flowering and, subsequently, cropping.





## 4 spring onions

These versatile vegies take up very little room in a vegie patch so, for a constant supply, aim to plant a new row every four weeks. Chives are also a great value plant in small vegie plots as they produce attractive purple flowers, which are magnets for beneficial insects. Garlic chives are handy as they give a garlic taste to cooking and have pretty white flowers.

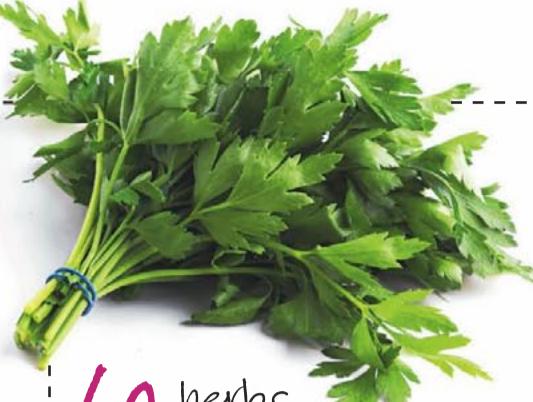
## 5 climbing beans

Even though dwarf beans are quicker to fruit than climbing beans and work well in small spaces, climbing varieties will give you beans for a longer period. They also produce at least three times more yield per plant than bush beans, and come in a range of types and colours.



## 8 malabar spinach

Also known as Ceylon spinach, this vegie can be grown up a lattice or frame. It's best grown from seed sown in spring when the risk of frost is over, however, it will remain perennial in warmer climates. It can be eaten raw or cooked.



## 6 herbs

Every kitchen needs some basic fresh herbs, such as parsley (above). A parsley plant will remain productive for more than a year if you keep cutting off flower spikes. Basil and coriander can be popped in around other larger vegies. There are several perennial herbs that can also be grown in confined spaces, such as thyme, sage and rosemary.

## 7 mustards

Small mustards, such as mizuna and mibuna, add zing to a salad or stir-fry. They can be planted at any time of year and can be harvested from when the plants are quite young, until the plant matures. Regularly cut off any flowering stems that develop to keep your plants growing longer.



## 9 Asian greens

There are so many varieties of these to choose from, including buk choy, pak choy, tatsoi and yukina. Individual leaves can be harvested when young, or the whole head picked. They grow all year round, although tend to bolt to seed in spring. They'll grow in sun or semi-shade.



## 10 sprouting broccoli

While many of the large headed broccoli varieties take a long time to mature, sprouting varieties will produce many small broccolini-like heads sooner and continue to crop for up to three months. Sprouting broccoli is available in green and purple varieties, and can be used in cooking or raw in salads. Even once the small heads start to flower, the broccoli can still be eaten.



# recipes to try

Poached, baked or simply eaten fresh, pears are one of the most versatile potager fruits



## beetroot, pear & feta salad

This combination of beetroot, pear and micro salad greens looks like autumn on a plate

### serves 4

3 bunches baby beetroots  
1 Williams pear  
1/4 cup (25g) walnuts, toasted  
200g marinated feta, drained

2 cups micro salad leaves\*  
1/3 cup (80ml) walnut oil\*  
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar  
1 tbsp honey

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Trim bunches of beetroot, then wrap each bunch in foil and place on a baking tray. Roast for 45 minutes. Allow to cool, peel and halve if large.
2. Slice the pear and arrange on a serving platter with the beetroot, walnuts, feta and micro salad leaves.
3. Whisk together the walnut oil, balsamic vinegar and honey, then season to taste. Drizzle over the salad just before serving.

**Micro salad leaves** are from selected greengrocers and farmers' markets. Walnut oil is from delis, gourmet and health food shops. Substitute extra virgin olive oil.

from your  
garden



## HOT BAKED FRUITS WITH BUTTERSCOTCH CREAM

### serves 4

4 small, red-skinned apples  
2 pears  
1 small lemon, halved  
40g unsalted butter  
2 tbsp light muscovado sugar\*  
200ml white wine or water  
2 firm figs, halved  
2 mandarins, halved  
100g blueberries  
**butterscotch cream**  
200g thick Greek-style yoghurt  
1 tbsp light muscovado sugar

1. Preheat oven to 180°C and lightly grease a large baking tray.
2. Slit the skin of each apple from top to bottom. Halve pears, core with a melon baller and rub with the lemon.
3. Arrange apples and pears in a single layer in a roasting pan. Dot with butter, scatter with sugar and pour over wine or water. Bake for 35 minutes.
4. Add figs and mandarins to the tray and bake for a further 10 minutes or until mandarins have softened slightly.
5. Meanwhile, for the cream, place the yoghurt in a shallow bowl and scatter with sugar. Leave for 15 minutes to dissolve, then swirl through the yoghurt.
6. Using a slotted spoon, divide the baked fruit among serving plates or bowls. Scatter with blueberries, then drizzle over the warm juices from the roasting pan. Add a dollop of butterscotch cream to each and serve drizzled with the juices.

**Muscovado sugar** is from gourmet food shops and delis, or use brown sugar.

# pikelets with poached pears

Nothing says brunch like these fluffy buttermilk pikelets topped with seasonal pears and warm marmalade

**serves 4**

1½ cups (200g) plain flour  
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda  
¼ cup (50g) brown sugar, firmly packed  
1 egg, plus 1 egg separated  
1 tsp vanilla extract

300ml buttermilk  
25g unsalted butter, melted, cooled  
sliced poached pears, to serve  
1/3 cup (115g) Seville orange marmalade, warmed

1. Sift flour and soda into a bowl, then stir in sugar. In a separate bowl, place egg and egg yolk in a large bowl with vanilla and buttermilk, whisking with a hand whisk to combine. Add to the dry ingredients and whisk to combine.
2. Whisk the eggwhite and a pinch of salt in the bowl of an electric mixer to soft peaks, then fold the eggwhite into the batter.
3. Heat a non-stick crepe pan or frypan over medium heat and brush base with a little melted butter. Using 1 tbsp of batter for each pikelet, add 3–4 spoonfuls to pan and cook for 1–2 minutes until bubbles appear on the surface. Turn carefully and cook for a further 1 minute or until golden. Keep warm in a low oven while you cook remaining pancakes, brushing pan with more butter in between batches.
4. Divide pancakes among 4 serving plates. Top with poached pear slices and marmalade.



For more great recipes, be sure to pick up the March issue of *ABC delicious*. – on sale February 23. Available from newsagencies, supermarkets, ABC Shops or online at [abcshop.com.au/delicious](http://abcshop.com.au/delicious).

*Pick me now*



▪ **Pumpkins** In cool climates, harvest pumpkins and leave them in an open, sunny position to dry out before storing or sharing with your friends.

▪ **Carrots (above)** Start pulling early so as to spread the harvest (the carrots in the ground will just grow bigger). After removing the tops, store in open storage or the fridge crisper.

▪ **Mushrooms** Harvest the biggest mushrooms daily, giving the smaller ones time to grow to the desired size. Pluck with a rotating motion and trim the bottom to neaten. Remove any clinging soil with a damp tea towel to keep unblemished.

*also in season*

▪ apple ▪ asparagus ▪ banana  
▪ bean ▪ cabbage ▪ cucumber  
▪ eggplant ▪ fig ▪ grape  
▪ kiwifruit ▪ lemon ▪ lettuce  
▪ nashi pear ▪ nectarine ▪ pear  
▪ persimmon ▪ plum ▪ potato  
▪ quince ▪ snow pea ▪ spring onion ▪ sweetcorn ▪ tomato  
▪ turnip ▪ watermelon ▪ zucchini

## if you have...

Anyone with an edible garden knows it's important to stay on top of things. Here's a list of jobs to do this month

### 10 minutes



#### plant

- Sow members of the onion family.
- Continue sowing salad greens.

#### feed & water

- Boost the boron content of soil before sowing cauliflower, beetroot and silverbeet for strong, fast growth. Dissolve a pinch of borax powder in 4.5L of water per 4m<sup>2</sup> of soil.
- Water passionfruit vines deeply and mulch well to avoid fruit drop. Focus on a 4m<sup>2</sup> area at the base of the trunk.

#### prune

- Tip-prune passionfruit (above) to promote new flowers.

#### propagate

- Collect seed of spinach, parsley and lettuce that has bolted and store in labelled envelopes for planting next season.

### 60 minutes

#### plant

- Give priority to planting long-maturing winter crops such as cabbage, broccoli (right), garlic and broad beans.
- Start herbs and vegies in pots. Choose large pots with at least 5L in volume to allow more room for root development and reduce drying out. The mix is important, too. Add 25 per cent coir peat to your potting mix, plus 10 per cent compost; this will dramatically improve moisture and nutrient retention.

- Prepare beds and plant tomatoes in frost-free subtropical zones. The cool season is the best time to grow tomatoes. There are fewer pests and diseases about, and the plants thrive in the mild conditions which means bumper returns.

#### feed & water

- Apply liquid humus-based wetting agents and liquid seaweed to dry soils, and mulch to reduce moisture stress.
- Citrus fruit (below) are filling out so give them a deep soak during dry periods to guarantee a juicy harvest in winter.

#### prune

- Prune stone fruits lightly once cropping has finished. This helps keep the canopy at a manageable size and reduces the amount of pruning required in winter and water in summer.

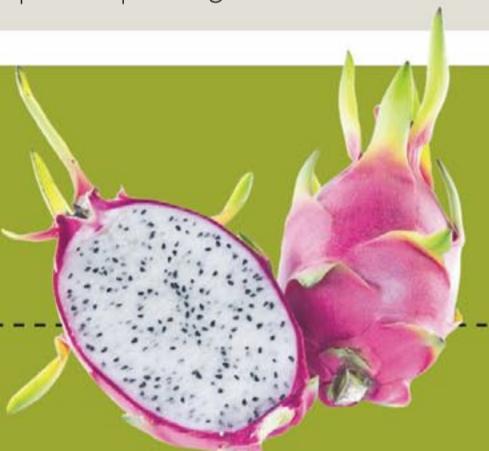
- On citrus, maintain an area clear of foliage 1m from the ground by pruning low-growing branches. This increases airflow through the canopy, which helps to reduce disease.

#### propagate

- Propagate cinnamon, hibiscus, spinach, jaboticaba, lemon-scented myrtle, midgen berry (*Austromyrtus dulcis*) and Natal plum. Use firm tip cuttings, about 10cm long, dipping wounds in hormone rooting preparation or manuka honey, a natural alternative.

- Propagate herbs by tip cuttings. Keep moist in a sheltered, semi-shaded spot.

### 30 minutes



#### plant

- Plant strawberries early this month in the subtropics, mid-March in warm zones, and in May in cool areas.

#### feed & water

- Prepare ground for sowing root crops, such as swede and parsnip. Dig the soil over, incorporating fine-sieved compost.

#### harvest

- Use new sweet potato leaves as a summer spinach alternative. They can be eaten raw, steamed or stir-fried.

#### prune

- Cut fruited raspberry canes to ground level for new growth.

#### propagate

- Propagate dragonfruit (above) by taking stem cuttings at least 20cm long. Leave to form roots, then plant into pots.

#### special care

- Net quince trees to stop birds and flying foxes feasting.



## in the tropics

### plant

- Plant cucumber, watermelon, zucchini and corn, and erect a shadecloth to protect seedlings from heavy rain and hot sun.
- Sow broccoli in seed-raising trays to plant out next month.

### feed & water

- Give ginger and turmeric a feed to swell their rhizomes.
- Fertilise water chestnuts by wrapping little balls of blood and bone in stocking and burying them underwater beside the plant.

### harvest

- Harvest young arrowroot tubers (*Canna edulis*) by simply twisting them off the main tubers. Small tubers can be added to stir-fries, sliced into chips, roasted with beetroot or simply boiled and mashed. Larger tubers can be tough so are best grated and used as thickeners or made into flour.

### prune

- Cut kangkong back regularly to ensure compact growth.
- Give mulberry and guava (*below*) their final trim to shape so they can recover before the last rains are gone.
- Cut back eggplant, okra and chilli, then feed and mulch.

### special care

- Check curry leaf (*Murraya koenigii*) and kaffir lime leaves for sooty mould. If present, apply an oil-based spray to control scale and other sap-sucking insects.
- Squash nut borer eggs on macadamia nuts.



### pest alert

Be on the lookout for...

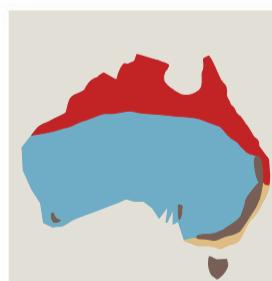
- **Cutworms that chew through seedling stems at night.** Push a plastic bottle with base removed into soil around plant.
- **Cherry slug on almond, cherry and plum.** If found, dust leaves with garden lime.

For more pest and disease advice, see page 78.

## sow & plant...

### in March

beetroot  
broccoli  
cabbage  
carrots  
cauliflower  
Chinese cabbage  
cress  
endive  
herbs  
kohlrabi  
lettuce  
onion (spring)  
radishes  
turnips



#### key

tropical/  
subtropical     ●  
temperate     ○  
mediterranean/  
inland     □  
cool     ■

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# flowers & fun

The Ballarat Begonia Festival brings colourful blooms and a host of talks and activities to a city filled with history, character and fine food

**B**right, splashy begonias take centre stage this month at a huge community celebration in Victoria's Ballarat. The annual Ballarat Begonia Festival is a free event featuring flower displays, markets, fresh produce, horticultural talks and live entertainment. It runs from Saturday, March 7 to Monday, March 9, 10am–5pm, in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

A natural place to begin your day is in the conservatory, where 2000 tuberous begonias create a kaleidoscope of colour. From there, move out to the gardeners' market and pick up some plants and materials from local suppliers and horticultural societies. Check out the wicking beds made from potato boxes and planted up by local gardening groups in themed displays, showcasing a form of no-dig gardening. And don't miss the horticultural talks. Previous years' guests have included Costa Georgiadis, Melissa King and Wes Fleming. Visit [ballaratbegoniafestival.com](http://ballaratbegoniafestival.com) for this year's line-up. Other attractions this year include a schools scarecrow display, the Central Highlands Water

'Grow Your Own Food' program, and the Mitchell Harris Wine Garden, where visitors can enjoy some of the region's delicious drops. If you prefer a different kind of pick me up, drop into the Tea House, fitted out in the style of a Moroccan tea salon, inviting you to collapse on a soft pouffe and revive over a pot of hot brew.

There will be art for sale on the lawn, or you might choose to sit for a while and have your portrait done. And there's plenty for the kids to do, with pot painting and planting, a giant sandpit, a treetop walk across a scout rope bridge, circus tricks to learn, and storytelling time with a giant inflatable turtle.

Ballarat is in the middle of a food and wine region, and is a city rich in history, art galleries and boutique shops. Last year, this festival attracted 45,000 visitors, and in 2014, was voted Australia's Favourite Event. Come and see for yourself!

The Ballarat Begonia Festival runs from March 7-9, in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens

open garden



## NSW SHIRLEY

This lovely, all-seasons mature garden in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains is anchored by strong elements, such as hedges, parterres, stone walls, a pond and a huge lake. Recently redesigned and extended by Paul Bangay, it includes beautiful mature oaks, elms, ashes, poplars and birches, underplanted with shrubs and perennials in a romantic woodland. 604 Monaro Hwy, Nimmitabel. Mar 14–15, 10am–4.30pm, \$10.

# March

## this month's shows and events

### Mar 7–8 Araluen's Fremantle

**Chilli Festival** 10am–5pm. Esplanade Reserve, Fremantle, **WA**. \$20. (08) 9496 1171. A wonderful chilli carnival, with tastings, growing information, cooking demos, entertainment and lots of spicy food to buy.

### Mar 7–8 NSW Begonia Society

**Annual Exhibition** Sat 10am–4pm, Sun 10am–3pm. 226 Annangrove Rd, Annangrove, **NSW**. Gold coin entry. (02) 9679 1386. Begonias on show and plants to buy.

**Mar 7–8 Garden RELEAF** Various times and venues. **National**. Gold coin donation to beyondblue. Visit [gardenreleaf.com.au](http://gardenreleaf.com.au). Activities are taking place at independent garden centres around Australia to encourage everyone to connect with nature – so important for our mental health. A blue theme will predominate – blue plants, blue gifts, and cakes with blue icing.

**Mar 13–14 Dahlia, Gladiolus & Floral Art Show** Fri 1–6pm, Sat 10am–4.30pm. Hobart Town Hall, 50 Macquarie St, Hobart, **Tas**. Free. (03) 6238 2100. Floral displays, floral art, refreshments, plant stalls, cut flowers, growing info.

**Mar 14–15 'Hidden' Festival of Outdoor Design** Generally 10am–4.30pm. Addresses made available with ticket. **NSW**. \$44; must buy in advance through [hiddendesignfestival.com](http://hiddendesignfestival.com). At least 15 private garden oases to visit throughout Sydney, showcasing contemporary design through to permaculture themed spaces. Many of the designers, which include Richard Unsworth and Matt Cantwell, will be on hand at the gardens.

### Mar 14–15 The Patch Primary

**School Open Garden** 10am–4.30pm. 53 Kallista-Emerald Rd, The Patch, **Vic**. \$8. (03) 5427 1488. Outstanding example of a school community garden, with multiple areas, including edible, world, dry, bush food, Australian plants and wetlands. Students run tours through the garden and wetlands. Great food, music, gardening and scarecrow-making activities, all in a 'village fete' atmosphere.

### Mar 14–15 Tree Elle Open Garden

10am–4.30pm. 4993 South Coast Hwy, Bow Bridge, **WA**. \$8. (03) 5427 1488. Manicured, formal gardens, including a box-bordered potager, jasmine-walled secret garden, and child-friendly features, such as a giant chess board. Tours at 11am and 2pm.

### Mar 15 Cruden Farm Open

**Garden & Family Day** 10am–3pm. Cruden Farm, enter via Cranhaven Rd, Langwarrin, **Vic**. \$25. Bookings on 1300 728 900 or pay at gate. See the Edna-Walling designed garden that belonged to the late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. Talks, music, vintage cars, children's activities, plant stalls, food. Fundraiser for heart and diabetes research.

### Mar 19 Garden Design Series Lecture – Myles Baldwin

6–8pm. Royal Automobile Club of Australia, 89 Macquarie St, Sydney, **NSW**. \$75, includes drinks

and canapés. Must book on (02) 9231 8182. Hear Myles talk about contemporary landscape design for modern and period architecture.

### Mar 21 WA Begonia Society

**Show** 9am–4pm. South Perth Community Centre, Sandgate St, South Perth, **WA**. \$3. (08) 9398 1396. State championships for begonias, and plants for sale.

### Mar 21–22 Plant Fair at Lanyon

10am–4pm. Lanyon Homestead, Tharwa Ave, Tharwa, **ACT**. \$10. (03) 5427 1488. Set in the grounds of a historic house, this fair offers a huge selection of plants, as well as talks, garden and house tours, kids' activities, garden art and tools for sale, and a plant creche.

### Mar 25–29 Melbourne

**International Flower & Garden Show** 9am–5pm. Carlton Gardens, Carlton, **Vic**. Adult \$27, family \$60. Visit [melbflowershow.com.au](http://melbflowershow.com.au) for details and tickets. Tickets also available on 13 13 29 or at the gate. It's show time again! Competition display gardens, ideas for your backyard, plants for sale, the Great Hall of Flowers and so much more.

### Mar 28–29 Plant Fair at Pocket

**Farm** 10am–3.30pm. 311 Priors Pocket Rd, Moggill, **Qld**. \$10, includes talks. (03) 5427 1488. More than 20 stalls selling plants, equipment, art and furniture, as part of the Queensland Plant Fair.

tell us about your event

The June events deadline is March 6, 2015. Send details (date, time, location, cost, phone number) to: Shows, Gardening Australia, NewsLifeMedia, Level 1, Locked Bag 5030, Alexandria NSW 2015 or email [shows@gardeningaustralia.com.au](mailto:shows@gardeningaustralia.com.au)



# go with the flow

Endless sand, a laid-back vibe and magical sunsets at Cable Beach soon have KATHY BAFLE moving to the rhythm of 'Broome time'

**F**riends had told me about 'Broome time', a relaxed state of mind where any sense of urgency is lost. I never really believed it until the second day into our visit, when my mind finally fell quiet and I was happy just to go with the flow.

We started and ended our days at Cable Beach, watching camels amble up the road, and drinking in the fragrance of frangipanis. We probably should have been more active and taken a scenic flight over the Horizontal Falls or got our hearts pumping on the hovercrafts at Roebuck Bay, but we chose to keep our feet on the ground and let the calmness of Broome sweep over us. Here are some of the classic spots we visited, in and around the town.

## 1 Pearl farm

Even if you're not in the market for a famous Broome pearl, Willie Creek Pearl Farm is a fascinating place to visit. It's a 38km drive from town, either by coach or 4WD (car hire places won't let you take a 2WD car to this area), and is found at the end

of Willie Creek Road. If you're driving yourself, an entry fee of \$65 offers access to a tour of the facilities, a cruise out to the oyster beds and light refreshments. A coach tour is \$105, or you could splash out on a short helicopter ride, which gives a wonderful view of a unique landscape.

## 2

### Mad for mango

The Mango Place (Kanagae Dr, 12 Mile) is one of those hidden gems that aren't always included in the tourist guides. It's in an area named 12 Mile, as that is its distance from town. It was fairly quiet when we were there, but it does get busy on a Friday night and Sunday when they serve wood-fired pizzas. In July and August, you might find a local musician playing, too. While you're sitting under the shade trees, sipping mango smoothies and tucking into beef and mango pie, hundreds of black and white butterflies flit in and out of the bamboo, and a portly duck wanders among the chairs. Make sure you sample the award-winning chutneys, sauces and

mango wines. If you need to burn it off afterwards, take the Rainbow Walking Trail through the gardens and mango orchard.

## 3

### Quiet time

We had walked past the Blue Body Buddha Sanctuary (5 Millington Rd, Cable Beach) several times without realising what was inside, until a local suggested a visit. The entrance is a cool pavilion, which opens up to a large tropical garden with a timber boardwalk zigzagging towards a 3m-tall crystal Buddha statue. The sanctuary is open seven days a week and is free (a donation is appreciated). It's often used for yoga classes or meditation but is also a tranquil place in which to wander or relax on the day beds with a good book.

## 4

### Resting place

In the early 20th century, during the heady pearling days, hundreds of young Japanese men died while working as pearl divers. They were laid to rest in the Japanese Cemetery (Port Dr, Broome), which has since been immaculately restored. There are 707 graves, each with beach rock headstones etched with black Japanese characters. The cemetery is striking in its uniformity and starkness, and remains a testament to the influence of Japanese culture on the historic town of Broome.

## 5

### Movies under the stars

Sun Pictures in Broome's Chinatown (27 Carnarvon St) might be the world's oldest open air cinema, screening its first silent movie in 1916, but what makes it unique is the opportunity to watch a new release movie while bats divebomb the screen and overhead planes come in to land. It's a good idea to take a pillow to help make the deckchairs more comfortable, but this is a unique experience and a must-do on a balmy Broome evening. Daytime tours run in peak season, showing you the history of the building – a more interesting tale than any plot-line on the silver screen.

## 5

### TAKE YOUR SEATS

After a day of beach, buddhas, pearls and crocs, relax with a new-release film in possibly the world's oldest open air cinema.



# on the road... pack the car and go for a drive

It's worth spending a couple of days on a self-drive tour around Broome, but note that if you're hiring a car, there's generally a limit of 100km per day unless you pay a premium.

Start your first day with a lazy swim in the crystal clear waters at **Town Beach** before tucking into a hearty breakfast at the restaurant in **Matso's Broome Brewery** (60 Hamersley St). Then take the one-hour drive north for a visit to the **Willie Creek Pearl Farm**. Allow a few hours here taking a guided tour and farm cruise, browsing the shop and lunching in the cafe.

Return to Broome, stopping en route for a look around **Chinatown**. Walk past the small boutiques in **Johnny Chi Lane** to **Dampier Terrace** and admire the beautiful pearl jewellery in the showrooms. Have some dinner at one of the restaurants in the area, and settle in afterwards at **Sun Pictures** to enjoy a movie under the stars.

On the second morning, start the day with a brisk walk along **Cable Beach** or by relaxing at the **Blue Body Buddha Sanctuary**, then visit the **Japanese Cemetery**. From here, head out of town to visit the **Malcolm Douglas Crocodile Park** (Broome Rd). It's just another 3km up the road to **The Mango Place**; look for the Balinese flags and the rows of enormous mango trees.

After that, it's time to head back into town to see the **dinosaur footprints** at **Gantheaume Point**, although you need to check the tide as they can only be seen when it's at its lowest. If the tide is not in your favour, instead of turning right at Gantheaume Point Rd, keep on driving down towards the **wharf** which has a beautiful garden, great fish and chips, and a lovely view over the water and mangroves.

If sunset is close, make your way back to Cable Beach. It's a magnet at this time of the evening as both locals and visitors are drawn in to witness the amazing colours as the sun sets over the Indian Ocean. **GA**



## travel tip

Kathy suggests, "Plan your trip to Broome during a full moon so that you get to witness the splendour of the 'Staircase to the Moon' over Roebuck Bay." Do you have a travel tip to share? Write to **Roadtrip**, **Gardening Australia**, **NewsLifeMedia**, Level 1, Locked Bag 5030, Alexandria NSW 2015 or email [roadtrip@gardeningaustralia.com.au](mailto:roadtrip@gardeningaustralia.com.au).

# great shot!

Our favourite photos of birds sent in by readers for the December competition

1. I took this photo of a **macaw** at a bird park when on holiday in Bali.

Barry Link,  
Kotara, NSW



1.

2. We have a willie wagtail nest in our garden defended by both parents. On this day, a **kookaburra** got too close.

Bronwyn Maurer,  
Matcham, NSW

3. This **blue-faced honeyeater** enjoyed the nectar from our silver princess gum blossoms.

Julie Mellor,  
Young, NSW



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.





4. These four **musk lorikeets** are drying off on a flowering cherry branch after having fun in a nearby water feature.

**Mick Brown,**  
Taroona, Tas

5. A male **superb fairy-wren** looking absolutely beautiful in my garden.

**Storm Clancy,**  
Devonport, Tas

6. This **eastern spinebill** enjoys the 'fruits' of its labour on a grevillea at my friend's property.

**Robyn McTavish,**  
Bawley Point, NSW



7. The time between these willie wagtail **chicks** hatching and their inaugural flight was only 10 days. The nest was in our orange tree, easy to watch at eye level.

**Hannah Alley,**  
Abermain, NSW

8. I spent 10 minutes getting a good shot of this **lorikeet** in blossoms. The bee was a lucky bonus.

**Robert Elliott,**  
Loftus, NSW



## how to... Shoot reflections

**Photographer Chris L Jones** reveals how to capture the mirror images in still water

Many gardens have water features, and still water acts like a mirror. In the right light and conditions, a photographer with a discerning eye can create some interesting images.

**TIP 1** Check the wind speed forecast. On windless days, water is a good mirror but a breeze makes ripples that break up reflections. The exception is when you use long exposures (such as in low light) that smooth out water movement while keeping the subject reflection.

**TIP 2** Given that a reflection is an upside down mirror image, choose the subject carefully to maximise its graphic impact. Check reflections from various angles to see what works compositionally. Getting the camera close to water level can create interesting results.

**TIP 3** Thin subjects, such as a waterlily leaf, can have almost no reflection, while a tree could have a deep reflection. Use height differentials to create unusual spatial relationships in your images; in this case, the lily leaves would look like they are floating in space.

**TIP 4** Control reflections by using rotating polarising filters. To minimise the mirror effect, block the light through the lens with the filtration system that subtracts the light reflected in a certain plane. The filter is rotated while looking through the viewfinder.

**TIP 5** Creating fine gradations of tone is a pleasing side effect of working with reflections in different types of light. Pre-dawn or post-sunset skies are ideal for this and, if you're lucky, you can use the reflection to double the often spectacular colour at these times.

See Chris' photos at [chrisljonesphoto.com](http://chrisljonesphoto.com).

# pets Q&A

**Q** We're expecting our first baby in July, and are wondering how to prepare our two-year-old dog. He's a cavoodle, and is quite energetic, a bit naughty, but generally obeys commands.

**Peter Thompson, Burton, SA**

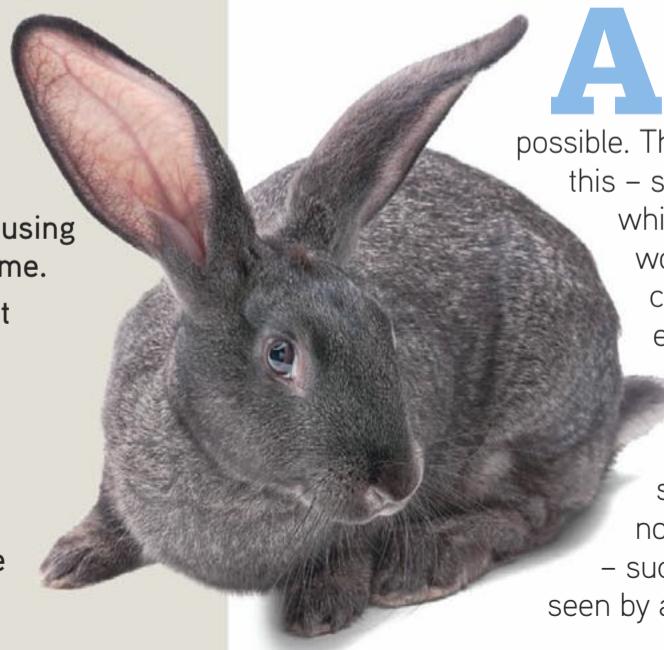
**A** Preparation is the most important thing when it comes to your dog and the addition of a new family member. Start any changes that you need to make now so that you can transition those changes slowly and there's no great impact to your dog once baby comes home.

Think about things such as varying routines, and putting his bed where you will want it to be. Start using the baby gates from time to time and have him on the other side to get him used to being separated from you for times when you don't need him on or around you. Change his walking and exercise patterns so that he doesn't expect the same routine each day. And if he isn't going to be allowed on the bed or in a particular room when the baby is born, implement those rules now so there's no negative association with the baby. Dogs are creatures of habit; he'll need to learn to roll with the changes.

Basic training is also important. Preparing your dog for the new arrival can be made more difficult if your dog doesn't have

### 5 tips to prepare your dog for a new baby

- Prepare and implement changes now so there's no negative association with the baby when it arrives.
- Your dog needs basic training so that you can guide and educate him appropriately, using cues that he knows, once your baby is home.
- Vary his routines so that he doesn't expect the same routine each day.
- Write up some house rules. If he won't be allowed on the bed, in the baby's room or on the couch, implement those rules now.
- Get him used to being on the other side of a baby gate to you so that you can have separation when you need it, and he doesn't become stressed and anxious.



### BABY ON BOARD

Changing routine is one way to prepare a dog for the arrival of a new family member.



the basic skills. Your dog must be able to sit, drop, stay and come when called. If he doesn't do these, go back to the basics and get them up to scratch. Appropriate training exercises will give you control and contribute greatly toward allowing your dog to remain an intrinsic part of the family.

**Trudi Thorpe, DogLOGIC Dog Training, [doglogic.com.au](http://doglogic.com.au)**

**Q** My pet rabbit has developed a head tilt. What's causing it?  
**Jade Lawrence, Willoughby, NSW**

**A** Head tilt in a rabbit is a serious health concern, and the first point of call will be your vet as soon as possible. There are a number of causes for this – some are treatable if caught early, while others have long-term effects or worse. Some of the more common causes of head tilt include middle ear infection, stroke, protozoan infection, cancer and muscle contraction disorders, among others. Rabbits are extremely sensitive so it's important, if you notice any changes with your bunny – such as a head tilt – to have them seen by a vet ASAP. Best of luck!

**Dr P Kirkpatrick, Bayswater Vet Clinic, [bayswatervet.com.au](http://bayswatervet.com.au)**



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by jackie french



# chookyard favourites

Some plants are made for the high nitrogen environment of the chook run, while others just can't stand the heat

**C**hook pens are places of wonderful fertility – too much, sometimes, as fresh manure can burn some plants. But if you choose the right plants, they'll flourish. They may feed your chooks, too.

### trees in the chook pen

Deciduous trees shade chook sheds in summer, then let sunlight in during winter. In hotter areas, year-round shade may be welcome, but the lack of light in winter may mean your chooks don't lay as prolifically.

Trees in the chook pen need to be deep-rooted, as shallow roots can be burned by manure. Their roots also need to be well protected from the ravages of the chooks' natural desire to scratch.

Go for plum trees, pears, white or black mulberries, or mangoes in hot areas. Fruits that fall from the trees when they are ripe or infected with fruit fly are good, so the chooks can eat the fruit – and fruit fly, too. Avoid shallow-rooted citrus – they're more prone to scale, and chooks usually don't like the peel.

### a good cover-up

Think vigorous, though not too big, so avoid ivy or wisteria, which can lift a roof. We have a rambling rose growing over our pen, with pink blooms in summer and bare branches in winter. In hotter climates, where you want year-round shade, try one of the smaller bougainvilleas.

Grapes, kiwifruit, brambleberries and chokos can be good, but only if you or the chooks can reach them to harvest them. If you can't harvest them, they may attract wild birds. If you want fast growers in summer only, try climbing beans.

### go with the flow

Manure, and fertility, flows downhill. We have a grove of camellias below our chook shed, capturing all that nitrogen. Hybrid tea roses grow gloriously, too, putting on flush after flush of chook-fed flowers. It's the art of 'planting with chooks' – choosing the right plants, then watching them flourish. **GA**



**Q** Crows have been taking our eggs out of the chooks' nest. What can we do?  
**S Middleton, via email**

**A** We hung one of those hideous plastic strip curtains in the door of our chook house to stop the birds flying in and eating the hen food. It didn't bother the chooks, but wild birds saw the strips of plastic as a barrier and wouldn't fly through it. But crows are all too intelligent. You may need to move the nesting boxes and make them less obvious, and collect the eggs for a few weeks too, before the crows can get them, to break the habit. You could also try putting up two dangling curtain strips, not just one.

**Q** What's the best way to use lots of autumn eggs?  
**J Reynolds, via email**

**A** Six big, egg-rich fruit cakes or Christmas puddings! They're perfect in the cooler weather and will feed everyone through winter and spring. Frittata, omelettes, and egg-rich vegetable slices are great, too.

**Do you have a chook question?** Email us at [chooks@gardeningaustralia.com.au](mailto:chooks@gardeningaustralia.com.au) or write to Chooks, Gardening Australia, NewsLifeMedia, Level 1, Locked Bag 5030, Alexandria NSW 2015.

# ask our experts

Get help with all your gardening issues, from what the red lumps on a lillypilly are to how to grow boabs



problems solved!

Email your question to [experts@gardeningaustralia.com.au](mailto:experts@gardeningaustralia.com.au) or write to Experts, Gardening Australia, NewsLifeMedia, Level 1, Locked Bag 5030, Alexandria NSW 2015. Please include your full name, suburb and state. Questions may be edited, and questions and photos may be posted on our Facebook page. Emailed photos must be high resolution. There is no personal reply service for questions that are not published.

## mystery blooms

**Q:** Can you identify these flowers (below). They put on a gorgeous show among the other bulbs that are starting to die back.

**M Elliot, Rosebud West, Vic**

**A:** They look like *Tritonia* from the picture. This is a bulb in the iris family related to freesia and ixia. Also known as flame freesia, *Tritonia* flowers in yellow, cream, orange and brown over a long period in warm areas. It's an easy-care addition to a sunny garden bed with good drainage. If you're lucky, you'll get fragrance as well.

**Louise McDaid**



## odd red lumps

**Q:** What are these lumps on my lillypilly?

**M Kirk, Camberwell, Vic**

**A:** Your lillypilly has a scale problem. Scale insects live under the armoured domes you see and suck nutrients. They also produce honeydew – a food source for sooty mould – which is the black coating on the leaves. This interferes with photosynthesis, weakening the plant. Spray with horticultural oil to kill the scale and wipe off the mould with a damp cloth. If it covers a big chunk or is unsightly, cut off affected areas or replace the plant.

**Ally Jackson**



# CROP destroyers

From nasty nematodes to frenzied leaf munchers, here's a visual guide to some backyard bugs you won't want in your patch



## 1. PLANTHOPPERS

### • Flatidae

Planthoppers are a group of sap-sucking insects that cause little actual feeding damage, but they exude honeydew, which encourages sooty mould and ants. Many plants may be attacked including citrus, grapes, pawpaw and mango. Common planthopper species are 10mm in length and roughly triangular. Nymphs are wingless with waxy tail filaments.

**Prevention** Control ants. Band susceptible plants with horticultural glue.

**Treatment** Minor infestations can be hosed off. There are no insecticides registered for domestic use against planthoppers.

**Enemies** Parasitic wasps, assassin bugs, lacewings and spiders.

## 2. GREVILLEA LOOPER

### • *Oenochroma vinaria*

Grevillea looper is the larva of a common native moth that occurs across eastern and southern Australia, including south-west Western Australia. Larvae chew the leaves of grevillea, hakea and

occasionally banksia plants. Larvae are greenish-brown, smooth-skinned caterpillars up to 80mm long covered in white spots. A few caterpillars can cause great damage to young plants.

**Prevention** Look for larvae in early summer before they do too much damage. Larvae feed at night and lie along branches during the day, making them difficult to see.

**Treatment** Pick off and squash or feed to birds. Apply Dipel or pyrethrum in preference to other insecticides. Follow label.

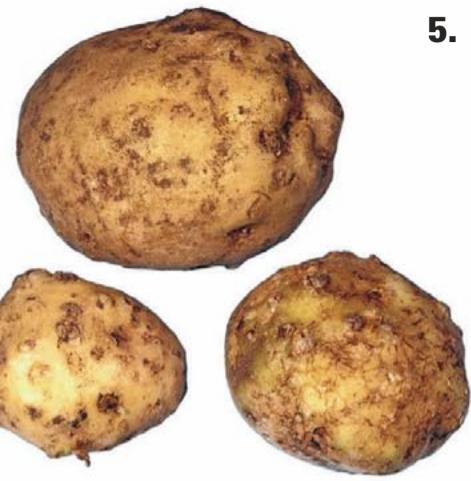
**Enemies** Parasitic wasps and flies. Birds.

## 3. CUP MOTHS

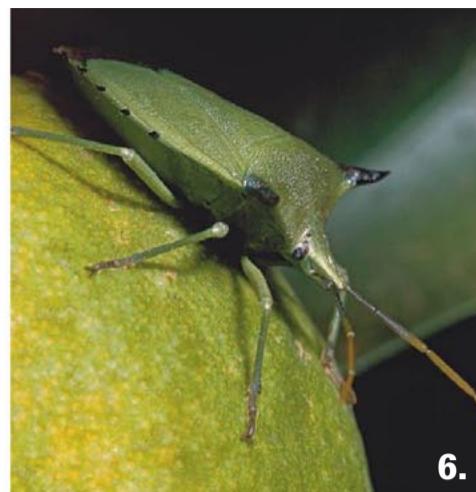
### • Limacodidae

Cup moths are native insects found across Australia. Adult moths are nondescript but their larvae are brightly coloured, slug-like grubs that raise stinging spines if disturbed. Depending on the species, they may attack camellia, hop bush, macadamia, gum trees, guava and waratah. Small larvae feed together and skeletonise leaves; larger larvae chew chunks from leaf edges.

**Prevention** Keep an eye on target plants for larvae.



5.



6.

**Treatment** Pick off leaves with small larvae. Wear gloves and pick off larger larvae. Apply Dipel or pyrethrum.

**Enemies** Wasp and fly parasites. Shield bugs.

## 4. BITTER ROT

*Glomerella cingulata*

Bitter rot is a fungal disease of the fruit of apples and pears. Infection can occur early in the season, but symptoms don't appear until the fruit begins to mature. Light brown spots up to 25mm in diameter occur on fruit. Black fungal fruiting bodies appear on the surface as little dots arranged in concentric circles. Rot penetrates the skin and ruins fruit flesh.

**Prevention** Spores may be spread by water drops so avoid wetting trees when watering. Prune to improve air circulation. Dispose of all infected wood and fruit.

**Treatment** Apply mancozeb. Applications are usually made initially at green tip stage. Follow label instructions.

## 5. ROOT KNOT NEMATODE

*Meloidogyne spp.*

Root knot nematodes are soil-dwelling, worm-like creatures about 0.5mm long. There are many species of this nematode, some of which have specific hosts while others affect a range of plants. A wide range of vegetables and fruit trees may be attacked, as well as ornamentals including carnation, chrysanthemum and rose. Nematodes enter plant roots causing them to form galls or knots. Stressed plants are particularly susceptible to attack.

**Prevention** Control weeds, where nematodes breed. Rotate vegetable crops. Encourage beneficial soil organisms by digging in lots of compost. Grow mustard before planting vegetables.

**Treatment** Destroy infected plants. Do not compost them. There are no chemical treatments available to home gardeners.

## 6. SPINED CITRUS BUG

*Biprorulus bibax*

The spined citrus bug is a native shield or stink bug found in eastern Australia that can be a major pest of citrus, especially lemons. Adult bugs and their nymphs pierce the rind of young fruit causing drying and brown segments, premature colouring and fruit drop. Damage occurs from October to April.

**Prevention** Use insect exclusion bags over developing fruit.

**Treatment** Look for egg masses. Watch them for a week to see if they are parasitised (eggs turn black). If not, squash eggs. No insecticides are registered against spined citrus bug.

**Enemies** Wasps, spiders, assassin bugs and birds. **GA**

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# take a break

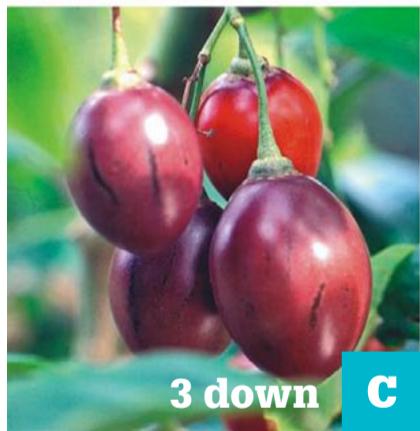
Make a cuppa and put your feet up – it's time to relax. By solving our monthly puzzle, you could be in the running to win this Searles garden pack valued at \$205



10 across a



12 across b



3 down c



063

## ACROSS

1. Relating to plants (7)
5. Legume much used in Asian food (4,3)
10. Vine with funnel-shaped yellow or purple flowers (9) **PICTURE A**
11. Dunk (7)
12. Plant whose flowers close in bad weather (7,9) **PICTURE B**
13. Lithe, flexible (6)
14. Vein in the centre of a leaf (6)
17. Small dark purple fruit (6)
19. Single-celled creature (6)
21. Make beloved (6)
23. Levels (6)
26. Low spreading succulent plant with glistening daisy-like flowers (11,5)

## DOWN

1. Meat used for Wiener schnitzel (4)
2. The mushroom *Psilocybe cubensis* (4,3)
3. Tree tomato (9) **PICTURE C**
4. Long-shafted weapon (5)
5. Wetlands (6)
6. Painkiller prepared from poppies (5)
7. Ancient city buried in AD79 (7)
8. Cook's accessory (5)
9. Skin of a fruit (4)

## DOWN

13. Marsh plant (5)
15. Type of bread (3)
16. Divulge information or spill the ... (5)
18. Wet soft earth (3)
20. Citrus fruit preserve (9)
22. Plants that live for a year or less (7)
24. Far, remote (7)
25. Place favouring rapid growth (6)
26. Calm, soothe (4)
27. Large genus including pansy (5)
28. Plant with fleshy leaves and star-shaped flowers (5)
29. A white heron (5)
30. Seaweed jelly (4)

**Solution next month**

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### how to enter

We have a Searles garden pack, valued at \$205, to give away. It includes the products listed above. To enter, unscramble the highlighted letters in the crossword and email your answer to [comp@gardeningaustralia.com.au](mailto:comp@gardeningaustralia.com.au) with 'Grow' in the subject line by March 8. Include your name and postal address. For full terms and conditions, visit [homelife.com.au/terms](http://homelife.com.au/terms).

## winners

**Big Kahuna Bean Bags (Dec 2014)**  
T Howard, Tas; J Stone, WA.

**Love Your Garden book (Dec 2014)**  
B Allen, NSW; S Armstrong-Syberg, Qld; K Bell, ACT; C Bernoth, Qld;

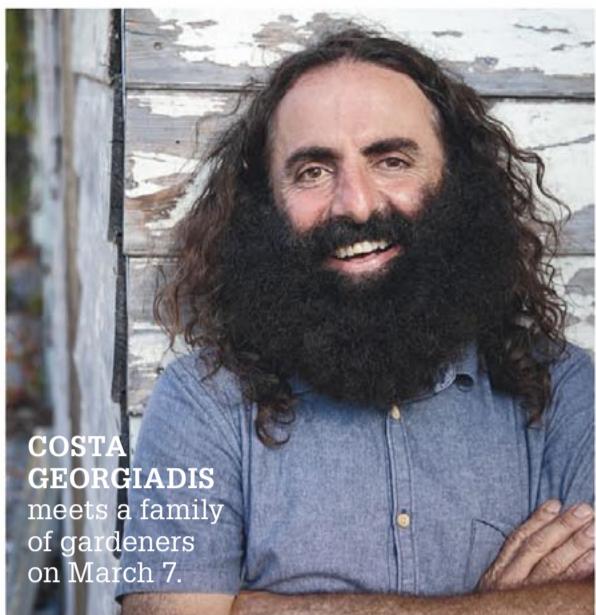
J Harrison, NSW; S Jordan, Vic; A Kearns, NSW; S Mansell, Vic; B Maywald, NSW; L McKay, Vic; A McKenzie, Qld; J McKrill, WA; A Orme, Qld; P Power, NSW; J Sharpe, Vic. **Baa Baa Brew Pack (Dec 2014)** H Alley, NSW. **Birdies Pack (Dec 2014)** S Threlfall, NSW.

February's unscrambled word: hedge

## solution

### February 2015 crossword





## We're back!

Tune in on Saturday, March 7 when *Gardening Australia* returns for 2015.

Join the team who are back on the tools to bring you inspiration and advice from around the country. Follow our expert presenters as they explore the incredible diversity of plants, gardens, and the people who grow them.

Gain privileged access to some of Australia's best backyards, go behind the scenes of our most significant gardens, and meet colourful characters to discover their secrets to success.

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See you in the garden!

The GA Team

### March 7

**Costa Georgiadis** meets a family that is getting started on a new productive plot, **Jane Edmanson** visits the 2012 Gardener of the Year, horticultural therapist Steven Wells, to explore his colourful and creative home garden, and **Tino Carnevale** is back in The Patch planting autumn vegies.

To view previous episodes of the show, visit [abc.net.au/gardening](http://abc.net.au/gardening).

# radio

For details of programs on your local ABC station, call 139 994 or visit [abc.net.au/local](http://abc.net.au/local)

### ACT

**666 ABC Canberra**

Saturday 8.30–10am

### NSW

**92.5 ABC Central Coast**

Saturday 9–10am

**ABC Central West**

Tuesday 10.40am monthly,

Saturday 8.30–9am

**97.3 ABC Illawarra**

Saturday 8.30–9.30am

**ABC Mid North Coast**

Saturday 9.30–10am,

Wednesday 10.30–11am

**1233 ABC Newcastle**

Saturday 9–9.40am

**ABC New England North West**

Thursday 9.30am, Saturday 8.30am

**ABC North Coast**

Saturday 8.30–9.30am

**ABC Riverina**

Saturday 8.30–9am

**ABC South East**

Thursday 6.15am, Saturday 9.05–10am

**702 ABC Sydney**

Saturday 9–10am

**ABC Western Plains**

Thursday 9.35am fortnightly,

Saturday 8.30–9am

### NT

**783 ABC Alice Springs;**

**106.1 ABC Tennant Creek**

Saturday 8.30–9am

**105.7 ABC Darwin**

Saturday 9–9.30am

### QLD

**612 ABC Brisbane**

Saturday 6–7am

**ABC Capricornia; 630 ABC North**

**Qld; ABC North West Qld; ABC**

**Tropical North; ABC Western Qld;**

**ABC Wide Bay**

Friday 10–11am

**91.7 ABC Gold Coast;**

**ABC Southern Qld**

Saturday 9–10am

**ABC Far North**

Friday 10–11am, Saturday 8.30–9am

### SA

**Statewide**

Sunday 10.30am

**891 ABC Adelaide;**

**1485 ABC Eyre**

**Peninsula & West Coast;**

**639 ABC North & West;**

**ABC South East**

Saturday 8.30am

**999 ABC Broken Hill;**

**1062 ABC Riverland**

Saturday 9am

### TAS

**936 ABC Hobart;**

**ABC Northern**

**Tasmania**

Saturday 9–10am

### VIC

**Statewide**

Saturday 9am, 10am

**ABC Ballarat**

Wednesday 6.40am  
monthly, Thursday  
10am fortnightly

**ABC Central Victoria**

Thursday 7.35am fortnightly

**ABC Gippsland**

Monday 10–10.30am

**ABC Goulburn Murray**

Tuesday 10.05–10.30am

**774 ABC Melbourne**

Saturday 7.40am

**1602 ABC South**

**West Victoria**

Thursday 7.20am fortnightly

**594 ABC Western**

**Victoria**

Monday 7.30am fortnightly

### WA

**Statewide**

Wednesday 2.30–3pm

**ABC Goldfields-Esperance;**

**ABC Great Southern;**

**ABC North West WA;**

**720 ABC Perth;**

**ABC South Coast;**

**ABC South West;**

Saturday 9.05–10am

This information is correct at the time of printing but is subject to change.

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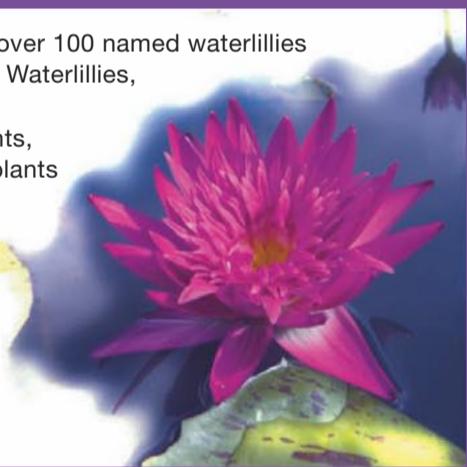
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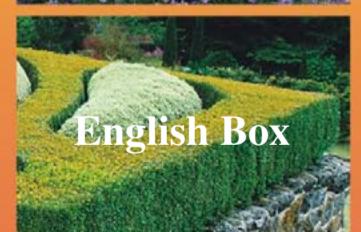
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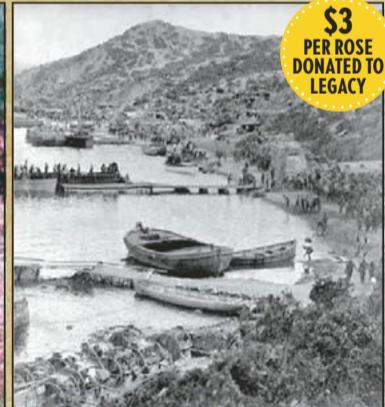
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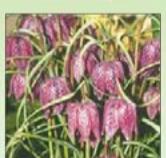
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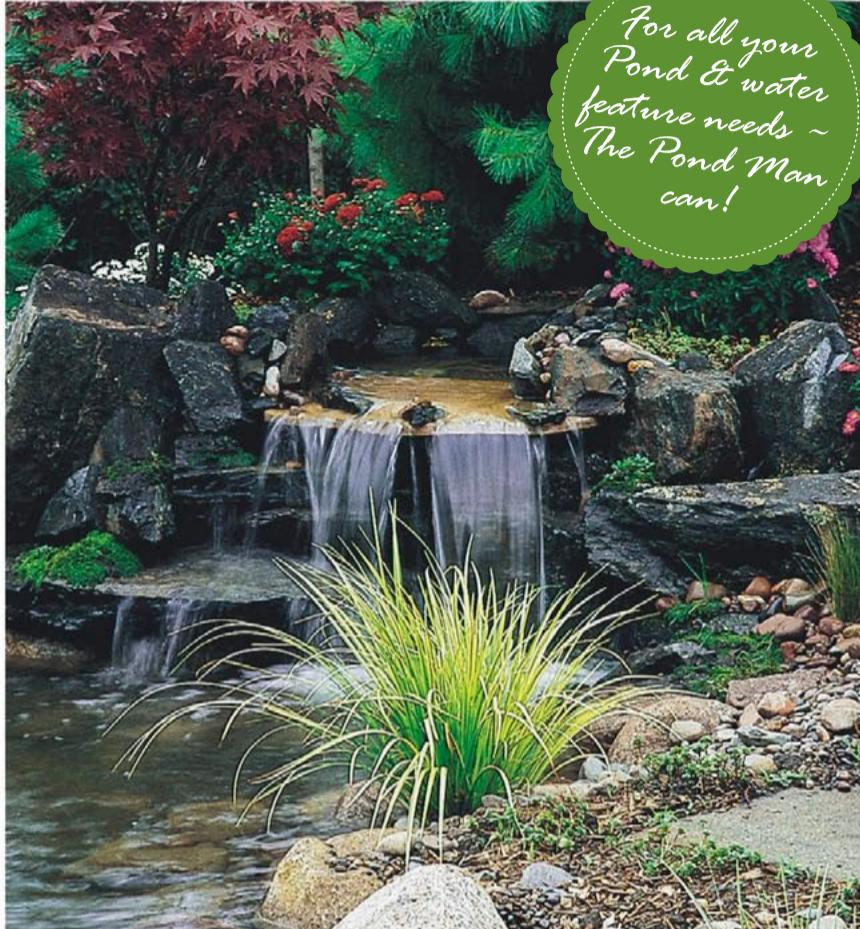
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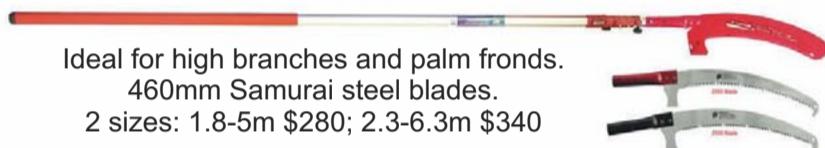
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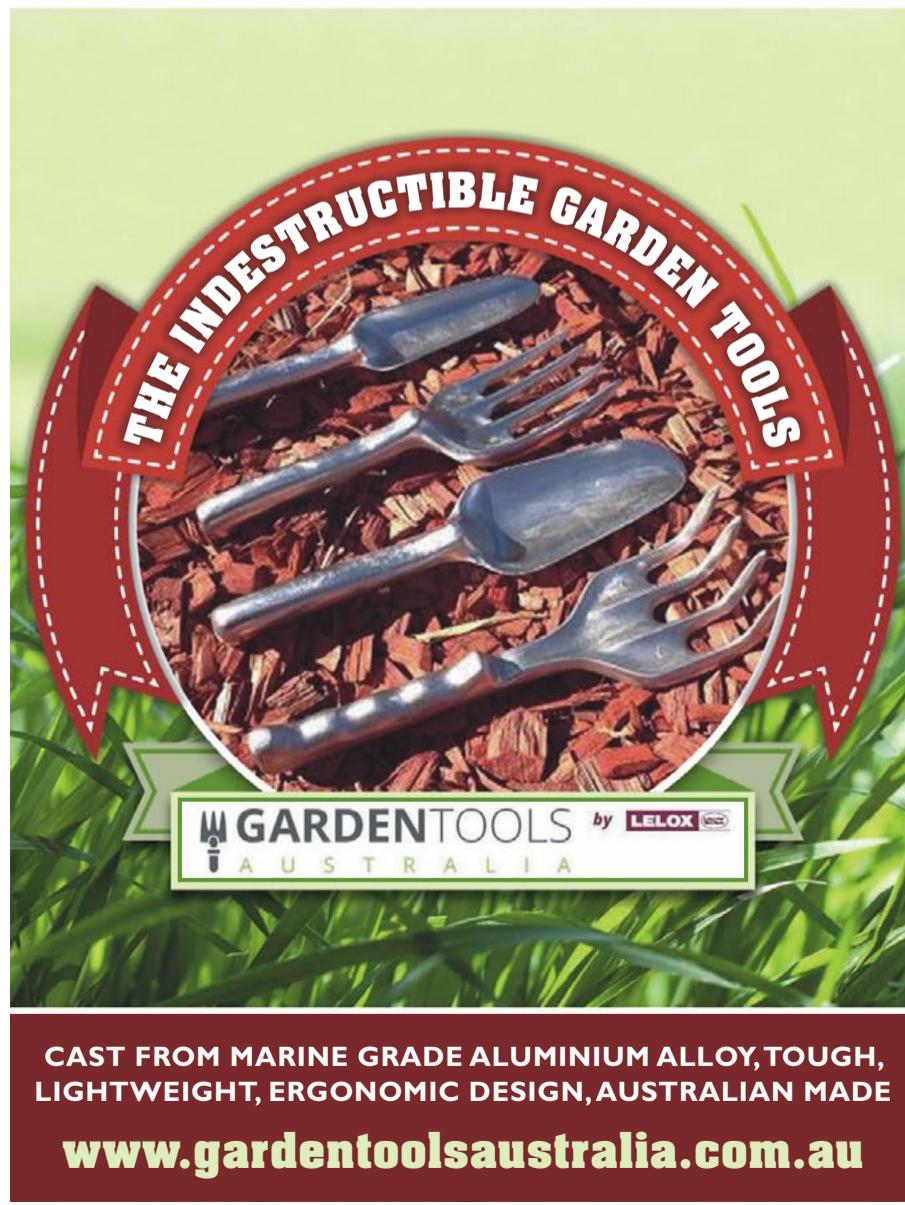
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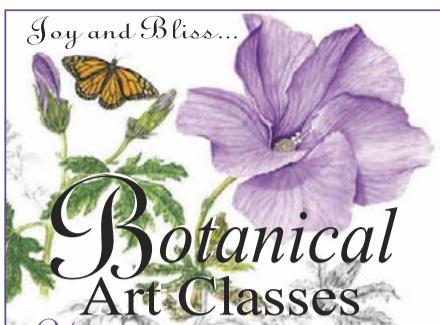
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## lost & bewildered

Michael is reassessing his approach to gardening after an eye-opening visit to New Zealand leaves him feeling unstuck

illustration by SANDRA ETEROVIC photography by VINCENT LONG

Once in a while, it's very healthy to experience a severe horticultural ungluing – to hit a 'crisis' (so to speak, and let's keep it mild) in which all your assumptions about how you garden, and what you're trying to achieve in your garden, come under question.

I'm recently back from a lecturing gig in New Zealand that included the opportunity to visit several gardens in the sav blanc region of Marlborough at the north end of the South Island. There were several moments when I was so disorientated, so delighted and so disheartened, in an oddly jubilant but devastating mix, that I wasn't at all sure in what state I'd re-emerge and return to 'normal' life.

First, there's the rainfall. I garden in one of the cooler and damper areas of Australia but, compared to what I saw, I may as well be gardening on the edge of the Kalahari. At times, I was faced with a totally familiar plant whose growth was so lush I took a while to recognise it. There were serious '*Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*' moments with hydrangea overhead and waist-high hosta so luscious that spontaneous explosion seemed inevitable.

As delicious as this all was, I wound up feeling like giving up gardening in my climate altogether. I certainly came away with the conviction that I should treat my once rhododendron-loving climate more like Tuscany than the Himalayas.

If that wasn't enough, I had to deal with being confronted and confused by garden after garden in which horticultural and design excellence seemed thrown about with careless abandon. The owners didn't even seem aware just how fabulous their gardens are. Time and time again I saw stuff I wondered if I'd be capable of even



*There were 'Honey, I Shrunk the Kids' moments with hydrangea overhead and waist-high hosta*

dreaming up, and if I was, whether I'd have the energy or conviction to execute it. These are alarming thoughts when you've been invited to an event to share your expertise, knowledge, experience or inspiration.

But I've learnt not to panic. I recognise the pattern of these ungluings, whether in my intellectual, spiritual, horticultural or emotional life. While they're always a bit freaky, the regluing – the reassembling of

the old parts in a new way, with perhaps a few new bits thrown in – is exciting, and provides a refreshed outlook. I may never be the same, but hopefully I'm humbler, broader and better than ever before. **GA**

**Michael blogs at [thegardenist.com.au](http://thegardenist.com.au).**

Have you ever become unglued by a gardening experience? Tell us at [yoursay@gardeningaustralia.com.au](mailto:yoursay@gardeningaustralia.com.au)

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